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ABSTRACT

The psychology of the Puerto Rican migrant to the United States mainland is explored. Puerto Ricans have been migrating to the U.S. mainland and returning to Puerto Rico for more than 125 years, and, in fact, approximately 57% of all Puerto Ricans have migrated at one time or another. The migrant experience, including the circular migration experienced by many Puerto Ricans, has been recorded in popular Puerto Rican literature. "Impressionistic" data from informal interviews has confirmed the patterns of migration depicted in literature. Five stages of migration are identified as: (1) the anticipation before migration; (2) the act of migration; (3) overcompensation in the early period following migration; (4) decompensation after the initial period of euphoria; and (5) eventual adaptation. The transgenerational impacts of migration are traced. Few, if any, Puerto Rican migrants have migrated alone; all exist in the context of Puerto Rican culture. An understanding of the psychology of migration and Puerto Rican culture is essential for the professional working with the Puerto Rican child. (Contains 33 references.) (SLD)

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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PUERTO RICAN MIGRATION

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This book is dedicated to

Myrna, who has dedicated her life to the education of Puerto Rican children.

Paula, who showed me about the culture of migrancy.

Debbie and Ken, my adopted family. Without your faith, funds and food, this book would not have reached fruition.

My extended family in El Redentor United Methodist Church.

and

To the millions who took the leap of faith, left the Island to look for the promised land. After forty years, many are still looking for the promised land. Others, having found the promised land, have remained. And to those that realized that their promised land is the Island and have returned.

The author is grateful to many Puerto Ricans who have agreed to share their stories. In addition, several persons have facilitated the process: Lillian Escobar Haskins, Carlos Graupera, Dr. John Laguna, Judith Long, Dr. Ray Melecio, Dr. Manuel Recio, Dr. Victor Rodriguez, Enrique Rivera , Wilfredo Seda, Dr. William White, Flor Santalo, Beatrice Speir, the staff of the Spanish Speaking Council of Reading, the students of the Hispanic Family Institute in Alvernia College, the bilingual staff of the Chester-Upland School District. My very special thanks to my friend Dr. Irving Cotto and his family, who gave me support in the most difficult period of my life. To my family: Dolores, Joito, Joita, Ana and Joana. Rejoice we've conquered!

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is to share with the reader a joint vision of the psychology of the Puerto Rican migrant. Puerto Ricans have been migrating to the United States mainland and returning to the Island for more than one hundred and twenty five years. While half a million people travel to and from the Island a year, the net migration to the United States is about 14,000 persons per year. In the recent past there has been a noticeable change in migration patterns where large numbers of older Puerto Ricans have returned to the Island to retire (Junta de Planificacion de Puerto Rico, 1993).

One significant fact is that approximately 57% of all Puerto Ricans have migrated at one time or another. Every Puerto Rican family has been affected by migration of family members to the United States. A psychology of the Puerto Rican migrant is essential to explain the effects of this process on the individual and the family. This book will attempt to document the collective history of the countless numbers of people that have broken away from their basic support system in Puerto Rico, severed ties with the "barrios" and people, and transplanted their home base, their nests, their life projects, their dreams and their goals to the United States.

Migration, the movement of people across cultures and across geographic boundaries, has been studied by economists, sociologists and anthropologists. It has not been until recently that psychologists have begun

to study migration in order to determine the effects of the process on the adjustment process of individuals. Berry (1990) reports that the process of migration and subsequent acculturation involve physical, biological, cultural, and psychological changes.

Sluzki (1979) has identified five stages of the process of migration that affect family stability and will determine the intergenerational adjustment of the migrant families. The phases of the migration process are: (1) preparatory stage; (2) act of migration; (3) period of overcompensation; (4) period of decompensation; and, (5) transgenerational phenomena.

Impressionistic data was obtained from Puerto Rican literature. Migration has been a topic of continuing interest in Puerto Rican literature. Theater, short stories and novels have provided impressionistic data with respect to three fundamental considerations: (1) reasons for migration; (2) the life of the migrant in the United States; and, (3) the return to Puerto Rico. Ethnographic data and results of interviews will be provided to support each of the major points discussed in this book.

CHAPTER 1

THE HISTORICAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF PUERTO RICAN MIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

The Puerto Rican community in the United States has its roots in the latter part of the 19th century. Puerto Ricans began to migrate to the United States in 1868. Pagán (1971) reports that because of the volatile political climate in Puerto Rico, many migrants settled in New York. Most of those dedicated themselves to writing and anticolonial activities favoring the independence of the Antilles from Spain. At that time the United States government explicitly and implicitly supported the activity of the Puerto Rican community.

Pagán (1971) indicates that the last two decades of the 19th century, prior to the American occupation of Puerto Rico, proved to be devastating for the Island people. Political persecution, natural catastrophe and the downturn in the economy of the Island all contributed to making people feel

that they needed to get out. This is what is called the "push" factor in the migratory process. Natural causes include the floods of September of 1881, the hurricanes of 19 August 1891, 16 August 1893, and 21 September 1894, and the drought of 1887.

Several epidemics hit the Island in the 19th century. The yellow fever epidemic of 1812, the cholera epidemic of 1886, and the chicken pox epidemic of 1888, 1889, 1891, and 1898 were among the most devastating.

Carr (1984) reports that by 1895 the food crisis was such that many people were starving to death. By 1886, the agricultural crisis had reached such magnitude that about 30,000 workers were forced to stop working and live in subhuman conditions (Carr, 1984).

The year of 1887 signaled the beginning of political reprisals throughout the Island. Morales Carrión (1983) and Carr (1984) have referred to this period in the Island history as the "terrible year of 1887".

Morales Carrión (1983) reports, that throughout the 19th century, Puerto Rican people fought very hard to obtain their autonomy from Spain. Pressure from the United States and the constant participation of the Puerto Rican Commission resulted in the granting of autonomy to the Island on 25 November 1897. By 9 February 1898, the Puerto Rican people had begun to develop an autonomous consciousness. This effort was short lived because of the Spanish-American War, as a result of which Puerto Rico became a possession of the United States.

Puerto Ricans, who saw their condition as desperate, looked for a way to resolve their situation. The friendship of the United States and its industrial development were catalysts that "pulled" Puerto Ricans to come to the Mainland.

The Puerto Rican leadership of the turn of the century saw, in the American political model, the possibilities of obtaining political freedom. Carr (1984) reports that two groups emerged in the Island: the Republican party founded in 1899 by Dr. José C. Barbosa, which favored statehood for the Island, and the Union of Puerto Rico party, organized by Mr. Luis Muñoz Rivera in 1904, which favored the independence of the Island as a protectorate of the United States.

In 1900 the Foracker Act set forth guidelines for the governing of Puerto Rico. This Act guided the life of Puerto Rico for seventeen years. The people did not like this Act because it did not improve the life of the masses.

On May 2, 1917, the Jones Act was approved. This new Act granted American citizenship to Puerto Ricans, and instituted compulsory military service. Soon after its enactment, Puerto Ricans were involved in World War I. With this new Act there was some progress, but there was also an increase in unemployment, prices of goods, inflation and a general crisis.

As a result of the new political relationship, large sugar cane plantations were established throughout the coastal plains of the Island. Consequently, there was a resurgence of economic well-being for a short

period of time. Pagán (1971) reports that by 1917, workers dissatisfied with the low wages and harsh working conditions organized into the Socialist Party. Santiago Pantín, its leader, felt that the best solution for Puerto Rico's political future was permanent union with the United States.

In 1922, a Harvard-educated lawyer, Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos, organized the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party. This party advocated that the Treaty of Paris, which ceded Puerto Rico to the United States, was illegal.

The years after World War One were characterized by two economic movements: Inflation and depression. Low salaries, high rents, and a terrible economic crisis paralyzed the commercial life of the Island.

Catastrophe continued to hit the Island. In 1918 and 1919 there were strong earthquakes. Three hurricanes hit the Island between 1928 and 1932: San Felipe, San Nicolás, and San Ciprián.

Pagán (1971) reports that in 1931, Mr. Luis Muñoz Marín returned to Puerto Rico after living in the United States. He was committed to carrying on the political ideas of his father, Luis Muñoz Rivera. He organized a group that called itself *Acción Social Independentista*. The members of this group organized the Popular Democratic Party, which promised bread, land, and liberty. They won the election in 1940.

In 1946, a group of decedents from the Popular Party and the Nationalist party organized the Independence Party. In 1947, with the

amendment of the Jones Act, Puerto Rico was allowed to elect its first governor. Mr. Muñoz Marín became the first elected governor of Puerto Rico (Morales Carrión, 1984).

Morales Carrión (1990) reports that, by 1951, Congress offered Puerto Rico the opportunity to organize a government based on a Constitution formulated by the people of the Island. This mandate was to be called Law 600 instituted by the 81st Congress.

Internal Migration

The precarious economy, natural catastrophe, and wide spread illness forced a large number of residents to move from the Island countryside to larger cities. The "pull" factor was the growing industrial base in the cities and the improvement of roadways and transportation. People relocated seeking security and personal well-being. Very soon more families shifted to the larger urban areas. The migration to the United States would be initiated soon thereafter. Migration became a way out of intolerable living conditions and proved the salvation of many Puerto Ricans.

Migration to the United States

Even before Puerto Rico became a possession of the United States, some Puerto Ricans traveled outside of the Island. Many went to other islands in the Caribbean or to Central and South America. Political and economic tensions accelerated the migratory movement, which had started around 1868. Travel became more prevalent after the change of political

relations with the United States. Two historic migrations have been related in literature: movement of Puerto Ricans to Hawaii in the early 1900's, and the massive migration to Arizona in 1924.

Although many countries in the Americas have large Puerto Rican communities, most Puerto Ricans have settled in the eastern part of the United States. New York received Puerto Ricans as early as 1868. Included among the most prominent Puerto Ricans to migrate to the mainland were Don Segundo Ruiz Belvis and Ramón Emeterio Betances. Both were abolitionists who had alienated the Spanish government and who had been declared by it to be enemies of the State. They became members of the Antilles revolutionaries who had settled in New York.

Accounts of migrants to the mainland include references to Don Eugenio María de Hostos (De Hostos, 1939). Concerned about the destiny of the Americas, he quit his law studies in Spain and migrated to New York. There he became the founder and editor of a newspaper called *La Revolución*. While in New York, he conceptualized his desire to develop an Antilles union, organizing the "*League of Puerto Rican Patriots*".

Cruz Monclova (1952) reports that Don Sotero Figueroa, another Puerto Rican scholar, also settled in New York. He became a prominent writer for newspapers throughout Latin America. It was in New York that Don Sotero met another great Puerto Rican, Don Francisco Gonzalo Marín, who wrote several essays that were published in a newspaper called *The Peoples Gazette*.

Lola Rodríguez de Tío was the first Puerto Rican woman to fight for Puerto Rican independence from the mainland. Exiled in 1895 from the Island, she first moved to Cuba and then to New York, participating in many revolutionary groups. She is best known for her poetry (*Mis cantares, 1971*). She wrote many essays and articles encouraging women to join in the movement for independence of their country (*Obras completas, 1971*). Most of her poetry is geared toward honoring heroes of the Cuban revolution.

In 1892 a group of Puerto Ricans gathered in New York to organize the *"Club Borinquen"*. The purpose of this club was to assure the emancipation of Cuba and Puerto Rico. In 1895, the *Puerto Rican Revolutionary Junta* was founded. Other smaller and less prominent groups emerged throughout New York and Philadelphia.

The mass migration of Puerto Ricans really began at the turn of the 20th century. The greatest activity occurred right after World War Two. Between 1944-1953 an average of 36,354 Puerto Ricans annually migrated to the mainland, peaking at 74,000 in 1953. During the 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's the out-migration of Puerto Ricans is well documented. Puerto Ricans today comprise about 2.8 million, and represent about 12.47% of all Hispanics in the United States (HPDP, 1990).

The Puerto Rican community in New York first established itself in Brooklyn, close to the factories. Now much of the current Puerto Rican population has left the large cities and has concentrated in smaller cities in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut. Puerto Ricans have

frequently found it necessary to reside in tenements and old buildings, sometimes without electricity and heat. They have lived surrounded by cockroaches and rats. By virtue of their citizenship, some Puerto Ricans have not been protected in the United States like other immigrant groups. It has been noted that Puerto Ricans have not been very successful in protecting themselves from racial discrimination and the injustices of the American system (Senior, 1965).

Compared to the economic, environmental, and population problems on the Island, Puerto Ricans saw the United States as a paradise rich in opportunities. They did not stop to consider the hardships they would encounter as they attempted to adapt to a new way of life, very different from that of their homeland. Many have, as yet, not been able to adapt to the mainland cultural and linguistic environment. On the other hand, many second- and third- generation Puerto Ricans have successfully adjusted to the new surroundings and succeeded but, at the expense of losing their Puerto Rican identity and heritage.

The HPDP (1990) describes Puerto Ricans as a minority within a minority. Puerto Ricans are the most metropolitan of all the Hispanic groups. Mainland Puerto Ricans are not easy to categorize. Some are recent arrivals from the Island, while some move back and forth between the Island and the Mainland. Still others are U.S.- born. Each of these groups is distinct (HPDP, 1990).

At the beginning of the Puerto Rican migration, few professionals

moved about. In the last ten years a good representation of Puerto Rican professionals has migrated to the Mainland. Large numbers of Puerto Rican teachers , nurses and doctors are found in cities boasting of sizable Puerto Rican population.

Conceptual Framework for Studies about Migration

Several definitions of migration have been offered in reference literature. The definitions of migration are based essentially on four components.

First, migration involves the movement of people through space. However, the mere act of moving does not necessarily denote migration. Simkins (1971) has pointed out that some degree of distance must be involved before a movement can be considered a migration. This distance can be either real or perceived, as in the case of the elderly, for whom a movement of a few blocks symbolizes as great a hazard as a journey of a few thousand miles to a younger person. Distance represents a barrier that has to be overcome. The greater the distance, the greater the barrier. Implicit in the concept of migration is the element of change of residence. Mangalan (1968) indicates that, traditionally, change of residence has been the most frequently stressed aspect of migration. One migrant illustrates this provision:

> "I have been in Chester 7 years. I came here because the father of my children mistreated us. Then, I decided to stay. I'm afraid of airplanes and, you know, Puerto Rico is so far away.

Interviewer: Are you planning to stay in Chester for a long time? Well, I would like to put as much distance as I can from R___ . So, I will probably stay until I feel secure that he is not following us anymore" (Interview 92).

The second component is that of time or duration. With regards to migration, movement with change of residence is usually thought of as being a permanent change. To avoid too rigid an interpretation of permanence, it may be useful to classify as migration any move made with at least the intent of being a permanent change. This is a necessary refinement in order to avoid the misclassification of members of the military, salesmen, commuters, or tourists as migrants. The following is a case in point:

"In 1973, I settled in Hartford. I came to go to the University. I went back to Puerto Rico the day after my graduation. I came back in 1986, and settled here in Allentown. My wife and I have a good job, we just bought a house , and my daughter is a first year student at Muhlenberg College. I don't think we will go back to Puerto Rico in the near future". (Interview 217)

Again, however, the idea of permanence, like that of distance, is difficult to define. One cannot fix any specific time limit or duration beyond which a move becomes a migration (which is the reason for stressing the concept of intent). (Duhaime, 1972).

Disruption is the third element. It is, perhaps, one of the more obvious indicators of migration. Roseman (1971) points out that disruption is one of the most crucial elements in the migration framework. A person may be able to make a permanent move over some distance and still

minimize the disruption, if she or he is able to maintain some amount of contact with former surroundings. This type of movement cannot really be classified as a migration, since only minimal adjustments have been made in the mover's pattern of living. Here is a typical example of disrupture in migration:

> "The day my divorce was final, I knew I couldn't stay in Salinas. Moving here was really terrible for me. I had to leave my family, my belongings, and my friends. I thought things would be easier here for us, but I have had problems with the language, finding a good job, and with my landlord. I don' know many people, and feel so lonely all the time...I feel like crying right now". (Interview 301)

However, a person who is forced to sever ties with former surroundings (and who therefore experiences a high degree of disruption), is more correctly said to have participated in a migration. Major readjustments in social and economic spheres are required at his or her new place of residence.

The final element in the migration framework is the conception that migration is an individual, (rather than a group) response. Migration involves decision-making. The decision to migrate is conditioned, in large part, by the comparison of information, about the present location and the proposed destination, by a potential migrant. Note the evaluation in these remarks:

> "I came to Lancaster because my sister has lived here for 9 years. She wrote to me and told me that I could find a better job here than what I had in Puerto

> Rico. She told me that everything would be easier for me here. So, I decided to come. I don't regret it. I have a good job, my own apartment and a man who loves me." (Interview 52)

Usually, although not necessarily, the critical information received by the potential migrant is done on an individual to individual basis. It may be through correspondence, or first hand contact with someone who has "been there." Hence, the decision to migrate is an individual one, because the same exact information is not available to all. Although effect on the individual is usually stressed, when considering the decision to migrate, this does not preclude the possibility that migration is a group response, as well as an individual response to changing conditions (Wolpert, 1966). One migrant explains:

> "The reason I came to Reading is because most of my friends and relatives live here. Most of the people from my "barrio" in Villalba have settled here. So, here I am". (Interview 199).

Mangalan (1968) makes a strong case for group response when he talks about collectivity. . If migration were not, to some degree, a group response, based on similar individual decisions, then it would be possible to classify individual, isolated movements of people as migrations. It is the contention of the writer that the choice of destination is not random, and therefore, we cannot imply that migration is solely an individual occurrence. Since we know what migration is, and how it works, the question is: What is the significance of Puerto Rican migration?

Puerto Ricans were no different from any other migrant group. The first generation came to New York looking forward to taking advantage of the economic opportunities available. Following the traditional culture, the man went out to the street to look for a job, and the woman stayed in the home and took care of the children. Sometimes, many of these men and women worked two jobs as they tried to make ends meet. They were God-fearing people who thought that they, too, would contribute to the American dream. They always wanted the best for their children. In general, that was not to happen.

Many second generation Puerto Ricans grew up without fathers. The close family concept had begun to disintegrate. Fathers were no longer in touch with their blood kin. Children began to look to outside groups as their primary groups, their "families" (la pandilla). These young people believed that their regular families by birth did not comprehend them. On top of that, their teachers were introducing them to a world that they did not understand. It seemed the only ones they could trust were other kids like themselves.

The second generation witnessed how their parents sacrificed themselves to provide necessities for the family. They saw how time and time again the system oppressed them. They heard them accused of not taking care of the neighborhoods, of being responsible for the roaches and the rats, and being the cause of the disintegration of traditional values. Consequently the second generation became a "me" society. They became cynical. They no longer believed that the family provided the primary support system. It is this second generation that clings to the many

Protestant congregations which have been organized in the cities of Pennsylvania.

The third generation has witnessed the development of casual relationships. They have not been to the Island. They like rice and beans, but they do not understand the traditional values of the Island folks. The third generation is looking for a cause. They are desirous of understanding where they came from, to find their roots.

Patterns of Migration

The migration of Puerto Ricans follows specific patterns. The four predominant patterns are migration, return migration, transient migration, and circulatory migration. In order to comprehend these patterns of migration, it is important to understand the terminology associated with the move.

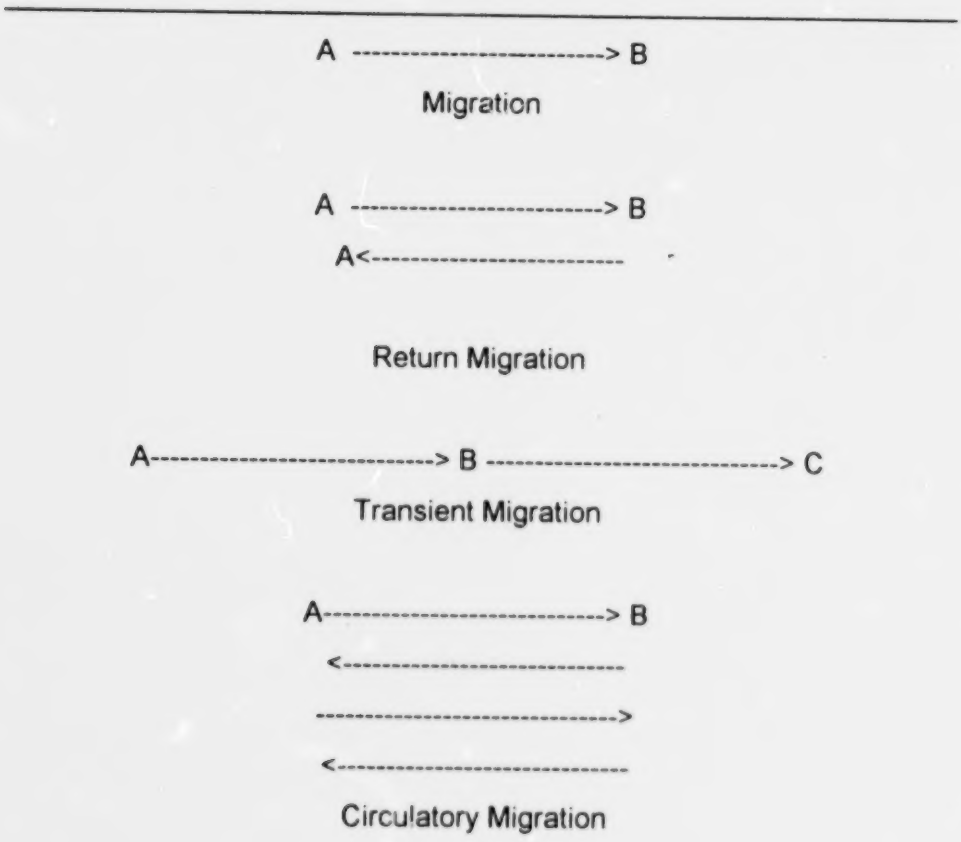

Figure 1: Graphs of four types of migration. "Migration" refers to a move from Puerto Rico (A) to mainland United States. (B) "Return migration" refers to the return from (B) to Puerto Rico or place of origin(A). "Transient migration" refers to a repeat movement from(B) on to a second or subsequent locations(C). "Circulatory migration" refers to continuous back and forth movement from Puerto Rico (A) to other locations and ultimately return(A).

The following is an example of migration.

> "My husband left Puerto Rico and went to work in Lancaster. He rented an apartment, and he sent for us. He said that the girls had a better chance to go to school and the environment was better for us We have been living in Lancaster for seven years now and we have a little one. I don't think we will go back now" (Interview 37).

An example of return migration is found in this interview:

> "I came from Puerto Rico with my husband and the children. At first I didn't like it here, but the farmer has given my husband the opportunity to drive a tractor. So we are going to Puerto Rico for the winter and return here next year" (Interview 51).

Transient migration is found quite frequently among Puerto Ricans:

> Interviewer: "Why do you have to move back and forth?"
> Child: "It was my father's idea. He got tired of one job in New Jersey and went to another in Vineland. He didn't like it there, so we moved to Allentown. He got tired of living there, and we moved to Reading. He is working in Exide. I have been to six different schools, and before I graduate from high school I will probably go to six more. I guess my father wants to try his luck in every state" (Interview 28).

Many Puerto Ricans are circulatory migrants:

> Interviewer: "Have you traveled back to Puerto Rico, since coming to the Reading area?"

Respondent: "I have gone back and forth every year since 1968. We spend about eight months here (Reading) and four months in (Villalba) Puerto Rico. You know it is so cold here in the winter that ! prefer to be in Puerto Rico during the cold months. My father and mother went back to Puerto Rico. I don't want to leave them alone, so I pack up my kids and go home" (Interview 109).

Interviewer: "Do you know of other people that travel as much as you do?"
Respondent: "A lot of people from my 'barrio' came to Reading in the 60's. Most of my friends spent part of their lives here (Reading) and part of their lives over there. It is like this: I have one foot over here and one foot over there. When my children finish school, I am going back for good" (Interview 122).

Migration and its ensuing problems

There are some specific phases that characterize Puerto Rican migration. In the first step: a family member leaves Puerto Rico and settles on in the mainland United States. Then a job hunts begins. Once a job is found, she or he saves money, rents an apartment and sends for someone else from the family. Once they have settled, they make arrangements to bring over another family member or friend who stayed behind. When the person arrives, that individual will also live with the family in the apartment. The conditions which might already be overcrowded, get even worse. The first problem encountered by new arrivals is lack of appropriate housing. Not only is housing scarce, but the high cost of rental makes their situation very difficult. Following is a typical situation:

Interviewer: "What is the worst problem for the Puerto Ricans in Lancaster?"

Marina: "Look! The worst problem is housing and the realization that the dreams that brought you here will never come true..."
Interviewer: "Could you tell me more?"
Marina: "My brother came here and looked for a job at Tyson. After six months he send for his wife and my two nieces....Last year I separated from my husband because he was always drinking and running around with other women....Well, my sister-in-law told me that I could come and stay with them, that they had a big apartment. She also told me that it would be easy for me to get a job here, since I was a social workers aide in Puerto Rico. I came here with my three children. They are good kids but they need space to run around. My brother lives in a two bedroom apartment. So, we don't have enough space. I have been looking for a job, but since I don't speak English I haven't found one. I worked in Leola for a while, but had to leave that job, because my sister-in-law did not want to baby-sit my children anymore. Now I am living off welfare, and don't have enough income to get my own apartment. I would like to go back home, but feel ashamed that I have not been able to experience success here". (Interview 227)

The second step in the migration process is to find a job. Any job! The person usually accepts whatever is available. The new arrival relies on family and friends to help her or him find employment. Thus the second problem encountered by recent arrivals: finding a job. When family or friends cannot come through work that pays, the recent arrival will go to the Department of Labor or to a private temporary employment service. One migrant shares such an experience:

"My brother told me that I could get a job immediately in the laundry where he worked...I filled out an application but they never called me....Here, let me show you, I filled out twenty two applications for work. I was never called. Neither my brother nor his friends were able to help me find a job. So now I

work through a temp service (temporary service). I am making $4.95 an hour. In the meantime I am still looking for a permanent job somewhere".(Interview 99)

Step three is to learn the language. Frequently, recent arrivals will be unable to find an adequate job because they have poor language skills. So the third major problem is the lack of knowledge of English. While there are programs that teach English, large numbers of Puerto Ricans, first and second generations, live in a linguistic and cultural ghetto in most cities (Macdonald, Adelman, Kushner, and Walker, 1982). Colón (1982) and Padilla (1987) document the reality of Puerto Ricans' conditions:

"They told me as soon as I went to the Spanish Center, that if I did not know English I would have a difficult time getting a job. I know a little bit that I learned in school, but not enough to speak to Americans. I am going to start taking English as a second language in RACC next month"(Interview 261).

Colón (1982) and Padilla (1987) suggest that, in spite of trying to find jobs and attempting to integrate themselves into society, migrants encounter many problems. The most prevalent obstacle being the isolationism of the Puerto Rican community in the United States:

"I was told by my English teacher today that I had to forget Spanish and concentrate on learning English. She told us that the music we were listening to was loud and she could not understand the words. She said that we should listen to radio in English. That way we would learn the language faster. I will be honest, if I need to speak English and move away from my neighborhood to find a job, I prefer to die". (Interview 17).

Unable to find employment, the only resource left for jobless Puerto Ricans has been the Department of Public Welfare. The services offered by this agency to Puerto Ricans have created many controversies:

> "You know how things are. Since I can't find a job, someone has to take care of my kids. Wilfredo (street name for Welfare) is my provider". (Interview 49).

Recently, Chaves (1992) suggested that Puerto Ricans came to the United States with the expressed intention of getting public assistance. Based on a limited sampling, this author suggests that Puerto Ricans will not be able to adapt themselves at the same rate as other immigrant groups in the United States.

Step four is to become a productive member of society. Many Puerto Ricans have succeeded in becoming exemplary and outstanding citizens of their communities. However, large numbers still encounter a major problem: racial discrimination. Puerto Ricans have been classified as Spanish, Hispanics, and, most recently, Latinos. Puerto Ricans have been accused of bringing roaches, illnesses and, prostitution into such cities as Philadelphia, Allentown and Lancaster. Some critics even blame Puerto Ricans for the HIV virus, a rise in crime, and an increase in juvenile delinquency.

The Puerto Rican Migrant Experience as Recorded in Popular Literature

La dicha en el pecado

Zeno Gandía, a medical doctor who lived in New York during the second half of the 19th century, is the first person known to document Puerto Rican experiences in the popular literature of the time. His first monograph was published in August, 1886, and was titled *La dicha en el pecado*. This piece describes problems encountered by *Juan*, a recent arrival to New York.

Juan, the main character, confronted a new reality. He did not have any money or decent clothes. He did not know the English language but went out in an attempt to land a job. The jobs which he found did not provide enough to pay for his room and meals. He began to suffer, because he was not appropriately clothed for the winter. Then he was asked to leave his lodging because he could no longer pay. In such poor circumstances, one cold and rainy night during the month of January, he kept warm by singing a tune which translated as:

> "A beautiful land, bathed by the sun, full of warm air, like my mother's womb where, even with poverty, there is no hunger".

Juan had dreamed of a much different experience. He had hoped that

he would be able to send a little bit of money to the family that he had left behind on the Island. In his current circumstances, he saw little chances of that happening in the harsh light of reality. The need to solve his sad problems made him decide to commit a crime. He fought temptation, but hunger and cold motivated him to become a criminal. He snatched a pocketbook from a little old lady. Soon thereafter, he was arrested. When he was taken to court, the victim defended him and offered to help him get on his feet.

Redentores

A second literary piece is the novel entitled *Redentores*. This story was written around the year 1917, and published in installments in *El Imparcial*, a local newspaper. It was not until 1960, twenty-five years after the author's death, that it was published in book form. He emphasized the influence of the North American in colonial society, the plight of the Puerto Rican migrant, and the perception of corruption frequently associated with professional politicians.

The book presents a female character by the name of *Piadosa Antarte*. She is a lady from a little Island town who meets a politician by the name of *Elkus Engels* , a secretary in the government. He promised her that he would seek the deed to the land left by her parents, that he would evict the current inhabitants, and return the land to her. The promises made by *Mr. Engels* were enough to soften her heart and she became the subject of his (colonial desires).

After seducing *Piadosa*, *Engels* arranges to send her to New York. He promised that she would be welcomed by his aunt, who was to help her plan her wedding,. *Piadosa* was so sure that he would keep his promises that she took a boat to New York. Upon her arrival, she became increasingly aware of the hostile environment and felt overwhelmed. The great city produces in her a shocking first effect: Loneliness and the realization that she could not turn back now. What would her family and friends say?

Some weeks later *Mr. Engels* arrived and for several days they acted like lovers. He even took her on a trip to Atlantic City. But *Mr. Engels* soon forgot the promises he had made *Piadosa*. She was desperate. One thing that further confused her was that Mr. *Engels* took her to a nudist camp in upstate New York. Several days later *Engels* returns to Puerto Rico, without fulfilling his promise to marry her and leaves *Piadosa* to face the city alone. *Piadosa* exclaims: "City, terrible city! I am afraid, I hate it! I feel the city as surrounding me, closing in, and burying me".

En Babia

Another Puerto Rican author who presents the theme of migration and adjustment to the United States is *De Diego Padro* (1930). He wrote a novel entitled *En Babia*. The plot presented in the novel represents the cultural adjustment of the recent Puerto Rican migrant. His character, *Jerónimo Ruiz*, comes to New York, where he meets *Clarita Aviño*, who runs a boardinghouse. Through these two characters we learn about the oreary monitory of the city and how isolated the characters feel:

"The boarding house is like the crypt of a cemetery. There is a lack of communication, intimacy, and happiness. Everything is English spelled, bars of soap from Vicki, and there is constant skimping of electricity, water, and heat. Regularly, monotony and silence are found throughout the boarding house...." (*De Diego Padro*, 1930, p. 119)

El Minotauro se devora a si mismo

Another novel by *De Diego Padró* entitled *El Minotauro se devora a si mismo*, published in 1965, once again presents the theme of Puerto Rican migration. This time *Jerónimo* is in the Army. *Jerónimo* is fed up with the discipline and in one scene exclaims:

"I wish I could return to New York, to walk up and down the streets without having to wear this awful uniform...." (*De Diego Padró*, 1965, p. 329).

En cencerro de dos badajos

De Diego Padró (1969) presents the first reference to return migration in his novel *En cencerro de dos badajos*. The main character, *Patricio Mir Costa*, a reporter for the *New York Herald*, migrates to the mainland in 1939, seeking to improve his life. After many trials and tribulations, he finds a job which he feels satisfies his needs. One afternoon he hears about the attack of Puerto Ricans on Blair House in Washington. Worried about the backlash against Puerto Ricans, he decides to return to the Island. It is through this character that we learn about the prejudices that exist against Puerto Ricans on the mainland. *Patricio* at one point says:

"Yes, it is true, they gave us citizenship, but we are treated like foreigners. As undesirable foreigners, which is the bad part. You know the experience with these people (the Anglos)..... they feel they are the purest race on earth. With what has just happened (the attack on Blair House), their animosity will increase a thousand-fold towards us, the undesirable, the ones who came to this land seeking a better life for ourselves and families. We will be denied jobs, and those who have jobs will lose. We will not find decent housing, nor boarding houses, nor hotels to live in." (*De Diego Padro*, 1969, p. 45-46).

With this attitude, *Patricio* returned to Puerto Rico after living on the Mainland for seventeen years. This outlook continues over and over again as part of the cycle of migrancy of the Puerto Rican.

Summary

This chapter has attempted to present the reader with a succinct description of the Island situation which motivated migration to the United States. The chapter explains types of migration, discusses the steps of migration, and presents problems currently faced by Puerto Rican citizenry. This summation will allow the reader to understand Puerto Rican reality as presented in popular literature and the interviews utilized for this book. The latter part of the chapter presents the literary overview of the process of migration. As the reader can see, (while very little attention is given to the adjustment of the Puerto Rican to the Mainland) the authors discussed above initiate a new trend in the national literature of Puerto Rico: We adopt the theme of Puerto Rican migration as an important part of our national history and culture.

CHAPTER 2

MIGRATION: THE PREPARATORY STAGE

Thousands of Puerto Ricans migrate each year to the United States mainland and thousands go back to the Island. Literature and impressionistic data have identified several stages in the migratory process. This chapter will discuss the preparatory period.

This phase begins when the first definite moves are made by family members to migrate. Sluzski (1979) notes that these indicators include phone calls, invitations to come and visit for a few days, and other correspondence with friends and families. Or, in some cases, Puerto Ricans were brought to the United States by employment agencies. One agency was the S.G. Freedman Labor Agency of Philadelphia.

> Mr. Freedman was the son of a veteran of the Spanish American War who had remained in Puerto Rico to help organize the insular police. Advertisements in Puerto Rico's newspaper and radio were used to attract applicants. An enthusiastic government in Puerto Rico collaborated in the recruitment and screening process through its employment offices. The screening process included a rigid physical examination and the requirement of a certificate of good conduct from the police. Island blacks were rejected. The men were required to read and write.

Those selected were brought from San *Juan* in a DC-3 transport airplane. As they stepped off the DC-3, the men each owed the S.G. Freedman Labor Agency $75 for services rendered. Freedman emphasized that the "gooks", as they were known, came with full and unconditional guarantee, "We have no trouble anywhere with our people; if anyone should show tendency to go bad, we'd ship him right back home." Freedman's assistant described the men as "industrious and conscientious, and willing to work two shifts instead of one."

Although Freedman claimed that he provided the men with winter clothing before leaving Puerto Rico, no winter clothing was issued. In fact, the only orientation about the United States that recruits received was on the airplane from men who had previously worked as migrant farm laborers in the States. Between October 26, 1947 and June 1948, Freedman brought 500 Puerto Ricans to work at the National Tube Company in Lorain, Ohio. **Source: CENTRO** (Spring, 1987). Community history, (Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños Bulletin). 2(1), 11-23, 27-35).

Timing for the decision to move varies, depending on family circumstances and conditions at the destination, as perceived by the potential migrant. The process of moving is complicated. It takes careful planning and much skill to get things done, and to survive problems encountered along the way.

First, most migrants do not move at random. Many have long-term relationships with friends and relatives in mainland United States, or vice versa, who keep them informed about job conditions, housing, schools, and medical services, etc. Other migrants move to locations where they know they can definitely work. A large number will settle in specific smaller cities in

Pennsylvania, because they have lived there before and have some ties to the world of work. They, too, keep informed about conditions, usually staying in touch with other migrants, or with friends and relatives who have "settled out" in the area where they are interested in working. Frequently, church groups are a source of information about opportunities stateside. The role of the church, and specifically the many Protestant groups that have emerged, is that of the extended family.

So the first part of the movement comes from gathering information about when to move. Once the move is imminent, the family has many tasks to perform in order to move. And they hope that they do not have to do anything unusual.

The preparatory stage

The following is one family's pre-moving procedure:

Before actually leaving, the most important things they must do are: pack clothes and personal belongings; get transportation tickets; put the house in order, (which means cleaning up, storing things, and shutting off the utilities); and officially take children out of school.

She (the mother) can take the youngsters out of school in various ways, and has done them all, at one time or another. She can go and talk directly with the teachers and the principal. She can call in. Or she can send in a note with her children to give to the teachers. Depending on what else she has to do, and

whether or not the individual school staff in question would be satisfied with a phone call or note, she usually prefers not to have to visit the school.

Sometimes the actual decision to move is not made until the last possible minute. Under those circumstances, not much is possible, and the family has to scramble to survive the trip.

A lady from Villalba said,

"One day we thought about leaving. My husband was not working and my daughter suffers from epilepsy, so we thought that things in Chester would be better for my daughter. It was like you would think about going on vacation." (Interview 5).

In the preparatory stage for migration, a first "up and down" emotional curve will frequently appear, expressed as a short period of euphoria followed by a short period of overload (Sluzki, 1979).

One man said,

"Things are not good for me here (Comerío). I am going to the States, stay there for five or six years, make money and come back. I am leaving in three days with my wife and two children. I am so excited!! I am tired of waiting already." (Interview 12).

Deciding where to go, and when to move, involves more than the availability of work or medical source in a certain location. The more sophisticated migrants go through a complex decision-making process. The process involves fast-gathering knowledge about the availability of jobs, adequate housing, educational resources for the children, and weather conditions. This information is usually obtain through word-of-mouth networks.

The decision-making process also involves many social factors. To be considered are the types of housing, availability of schools and other public services, and the presence or absence of friends, relatives, and local contacts. The recent emergence of a relationship between Puerto Rican migrants and Protestant churches, with conferences throughout Pennsylvania, provides a reliable network of information. It also offers a support system which was not readily available to other migrant groups in the past.

The decision-making process is less complicated, but far riskier, for those who aren't so well informed. It often takes two to three years of difficult moves, with poor financial return, before such less knowledgeable migrants are able to settle into a migration pattern that works. For example:

> "Sra. L was not sure if they would move to Pennsyivania or not. Last summer they didn't plan to go. But her brother just said, "vámonos" and they up and went. She said they looked, and looked until they found a cousin in Reading that would put them up until they found their own place". (Interview 24).

Housing Considerations

Housing can be a critical variable in the choice of <u>where</u> to move. Don Miguel was asked why he chose one location over another for his family. He responded that his wife had friends in the Harrisburg area, and that she had inquired with the Pastor of the local Methodist Church. They were not able to find adequate housing in Harrisburg. Instead they moved to Lancaster,

> "...where there is a large Puerto Rican community and the housing is cheaper and better." (Interview 42).

Following is a somewhat similar story:

> "Mrs. R said housing was one of the major disadvantages to moving. She said housing is always a problem when they go to Allentown. By the time they got their qualification for Section 8, there was no public housing of Section 8 that was decent and would accommodate her family, so she moved to New Holland, PA." (Interview 56).

Sometimes the decision of where to move is based on chance acquaintances, coupled with some reason to change the migration pattern (better pay, housing, schools or medical facilities). Protestant churches have played an important role in assisting families to relocate to certain cities in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Friendships formed during the first or second migration are one reason that some migrants decide to locate in the same places(ie. large number of persons from Villalba may be found in Reading, PA). Some migrants reported that they had more friends in Reading than they did in the hometown where they had grown up. Therefore, when things got tight for them in New York, they moved to Reading, close to their friends.

So, for some migrants, the target location may be an extended family tradition that crosses several generations. It may involve parents, cousins, aunts and uncles, and relatives by marriage. In many of the towns around Philadelphia and New York City, some family groups are third generation migrants. Their extended families also live in the same town. They feel there are many advantages to have family members and friends living near you.

The availability of social services is another variable in the decision as to what locations are desirable. Those cities and towns where migrants are given preferential treatment become especially attractive.

Some people report that they came to Pennsylvania, and have stayed in the Keystone state, because the weather suits them. Yet another group enjoys the migratory process, because it is through this process that they are able to meet other people and observe other life styles.

At least for some migrants, education for their children is extremely important. An interviewee, from York, reports that the reason she has stayed in York is that she has a daughter and a son in the gifted program in Jackson Elementary School. Parents who have youngsters with special needs, are prone to seek out the best school district in terms of services offered to children.

As the process of migration evolves and materializes, the family redefines the rules and each person's role in relation to the move. The rules, as defined in the preparatory stage, will be fully incorporated once migration takes place (Sluzki, 1979).

> "When we left San Juan, I told my older daughter to take care of her sister. *Juan*, my oldest son, was in charge of the carry-on luggage. I had the baby and her things. I knew my husband was waiting for us in Harrisburg". (Interview 84).

The decision to migrate is a very hard one to make. The person has to judge that the place they which is being left is bad and assume the receiving

country is good. Most Puerto Ricans have left the Island *"buscando un mejor ambiente"* (seeking a better environment). The way the act of migration takes place will give clues about how the family has developed coping mechanisms related to the move.

There is always someone responsible for instigating the move. Be that someone seeking employment or health services; running away from an abusive relative; or simply looking for a better environment. Someone in the family always benefits from the move, while there is also someone that suffers because of it. When a family migrates, usually the husband benefits, because he is probably going to begin work almost immediately. The wife suffers from the move, because it is her responsibility to deal with the formal institutions (schools, social services agencies, clinics, etc.). She must also take care of the home and stay in touch with those left behind. The following comments describe the redefinition of roles:

> "We came to Reading because my husband was offered a job in Exide Corp. I was working in Guayama as a legal secretary, but here I am home all the time because I don't speak English. Things had never been so bad for me, I wish I could go home". (Interview 29).
> "I had come to York as a child. I liked it, but we went back and I was doing well in Puerto Rico. My wife was offered a job here as a bilingual teacher. I am unemployed and things are going well between us. But I am thinking of going back to Puerto Rico and leaving her here...y que sea lo que Dios quiera (and may God decide)." (Interview 18).
>
> "We have been in Lebanon for three months. We came here because our second child had a heart ailment and my sister told me that, maybe in Hershey,

the doctors might be able to help him. Well, he is doing well. We can't go back to Puerto Rico now, because he won't receive the same medical treatment . My husband is unhappy here and wants to go back. What do I do?...." (Interview 34).

Another issue involved in the preparatory stage is the question of what will happen if things go extremely well. Then the migrant stays in the United States, and doesn't look back. Any regrets expressed by a family member is perceived and treated as an emotional problem:

"I can't see why my wife wants to go back to Puerto Rico when we are doing so well here. I was talking to a friend of mine. He said that the problem was that she was depressed, that she needed some medication to calm her down." (Interview 51).

Unfortunately, many families have seen their dreams go sour. They have continued to remember their lives in Puerto Rico and refuse to adapt to the new environment. They see everything on the United States mainland as bad and they continually revert to Puerto Rico for advice on what to do next. In this case, the first member of the family to develop friendships outside of the immediate group is considered a traitor:

"I told my son that things in Puerto Rico are better than here. There is more respect. But no, he has abandoned me in favor of working two jobs and hanging around with his friends on weekends, listening to that awful English music, and hanging around the Anglo girls on Penn Street". (Interview 67).

Irrespective of what happens during this stage, the migrants are setting themselves up to challenge the new reality. A test where there is a so called

"traitor" to the family, the language, and the old culture. And where there is an accuser.

Summary

This chapter has presented an overview of the primary stage of migration. The migrant experiences an elaborate decision-making process. Roles of the family change as the migration experience is about to begin. A moment of euphoria, followed by dysphoria is evidenced in the migrant. Family members face a new reality in the new country, where family members who integrate with the majority society are branded as traitors, and those who retain the traditional values are the accusers. The next chapter will discuss the second stage: the physical act of migration.

CHAPTER 3

THE ACT OF MIGRATION

This chapter will discuss the rituals of migration of the Puerto Rican people. While literature does not document specific rituals associated with migration, in most circumstances in the Puerto Rican culture, migrants are left to deal with the painful act of migration with only their private rituals (Sluzki, 1979).

In the Puerto Rican migration, two patterns have been identified: migration from the Island to the mainland, and intrastate migration once on the mainland. Although many Puerto Ricans came to the United States to work in agriculture, Puerto Rican migration is, by and large, urban in nature. This migration is categorized as the first airborne migration to the United States.

The principal reasons migrants move from one area to another, or from one state to another, are to find work, to get better pay for their work, or to better their economic situation (Davis, Haub, & Willette, 1983; Hispanic Policy Development Project (HPDP), (1984)

Prewitt Díaz, Trotter and Rivera (1991) have documented the fact that most people would not migrate, if they had reasonable alternatives. For example, when asked if they wanted to pursue migrant labor when they become adults, migrant students responded with emphatic "no's" all around.

There are two fundamental reasons why people move: economic and health-related conditions. The basic reason for migration, underlying all others, is economic. We refer to the economics of individual migrant families and to the economics of agribusiness in our nation. Many migrants move so that their entire family can work. Since children are out of school then, the summer months provide an opportunity for the whole family to work and make money. A recent agricultural migrant confided:

> "We travel to look for work, because we can't hope for work here, where we know there isn't any". (Interview 64)

Another woman reported that:

> "We know. We know there isn't anything. We know we are going to be tight; we know many times there won't even be enough to pay rent. You are not going to pay rent with food stamps; so, you have to look. You have to look to find work. Those who don't have stable jobs have to go out and look". (Interview 36).

A second reason has to do with the health and well-being of family members:

> "I asked Mr. Rosario why they had settled in Lancaster. He said that he had come here with other Mennonites in late 1950's. After he went home in 1961, he decided to return because his younger daughter was suffering from spina-bifida, and he felt that she would get better treatment here than in Puerto Rico" (Interview 29).

Another person indicated that she had moved to Lancaster because her son had emotional problems and he would get better schooling here than in Puerto Rico:

" I have three children in special education. They receive medication from the Clinica, and they are also receiving SSI (Supplemental Security Income)". (Interview 42).

While the act of migration may require only a brief time transition (three hours and a half by air), in many other respects the act proper may take considerable time. Recent arrival Puerto Ricans have told us about the numerous hardships associated with moving from one location to another. They often ran short of money, or had no money to begin with at the start of a move. They were isolated from home and friends. They were ridiculed for being culturally different. Possessions they left behind were at risk of destruction or theft.

The process of moving is very expensive, and many migrants arrive at their destination with little or no money and food. One lady with a family of seven, told me that one day in the prior week they didn't have enough food to make lunch. Others described how difficult it was to leave their houses unattended in another location. Some had previously had their abodes robbed while they were gone. To prevent theft, almost all had to remove electrical appliances from their homes before leaving. Others had relatives live in the house, or paid someone to watch it while they were gone.

The style in which people decide to migrate is based on their assumption of what is going to happen to them, once they arrive in stateside United States. Another factor is the degree of urgency to escape their prevailing situation on the Island. Some migrants declare that they are so disgusted with their lives in

Puerto Rico that they don't want to return there. They claim everything back there is awful. In effect, these migrants close every door available to them in Puerto Rico. They symbolically burn the bridge between Puerto Rico and their new lives in the United States. For these persons, migration is a final and unchangeable act.

Disassociation often fosters fear of strangers and an unwillingness to make contacts. Churches and friends help the migrants overcome this isolation. They are an important link between recent arrivals and the society around them. Segregation, as well as constant adjustments demanded by new surroundings and new people, is very hard on children.

> "When you have to move, you feel bad! Because you leave everybody and you don't know when you'll ever see them again. And you know you're gonia miss all your friends! And then you're over there and you don't want to come back here! Yeah, it's the same thing for wherever you have to leave. It's hard to have to always leave, and come back and say good-bye all the time. Like when you're over there, you don't want to come here. It's just the changing part that's hard. Once you get used to it, you adjust, right? And then you like it. Sometimes you get so nervous about it, though, you feel sick. You know, like an upset stomach (everyone laughs). You know, not really sick. Oh, just sometimes. It takes time to adjust. It takes time". (Interview 39).

Other migrants have chosen to come to the United States for only a short period of time. They are going to school, or are simply trying out life in the United States "for a while", irrespective of the time they end up staying in a given city. Some people leave voluntarily and have moved around voluntarily. Others have been forced to move.

Some migrants told how difficult it was to be without family and good friends. The following is translated from Spanish:

> "The disadvantage, I understand, is having to deal with people that you do not know, that you do not have a friendship with them. And to try to put up with them and understand each other. It is an advantage when you know people." (Interview 61).

Puerto Ricans are attracted to new locations where they can find people from their own home-towns and communities. They cling to the extended family concept. They also believe that they can extend their "barrio" life into any new setting in the United States.

Sometimes migrants, especially those unfamiliar with the culture of the stateside United States and the English language, experience difficulty in comprehending and dealing with institutions and people of the new town in which they have settled. There is need to provide assistance to confused migrants, to help them gain knowledge and access to the services and institutions which are already available to the established population.

Summary

This chapter has presented migration as an act loaded with positive and negative connotations. The mode and styles of migration vary according to the individual level of emotional development. It reinforces the idea that one person is always responsible for making the move. The chapter suggests that family roles are redefined along the lines of the move. Finally, it presents some of the emotional costs of migration.

CHAPTER 4

EARLY MIGRATORY EXPERIENCE: AN OVER COMPENSATORY PERIOD

The early migratory period is usually characterized by a feeling of euphoria. The family has actually managed the physical move. The basic effort at this moment is to survive in the new environment. Therefore, all family members have become very efficient and functional.

Migratory stress does not take its heaviest toll in the weeks or months immediately following migration. The period after migration creates a strong increase in the split between "instrumental" and "affective" roles of family members in the service of a basic need. This is the need for survival and adaptation in an environment and a culture that is alien to them.

In the case of the Puerto Rican migrant, ethnicity can be described in terms of the orientation it provides to individuals. It involves delineating norms, values, interactional modalities, the meaning of rituals, and collective goals. Early on, in the migratory process, there is a subjective definition of the individual organization of reality. Consonance or dissonance is clearly established, resulting from the individual's view of his/her reality, and the subsequent mismatch between expectations and the actual environment. . The establishment of consonance (or dissonance) permits the individual to make

constant predictions about how things are going to be, and how people are going to act and react.

The period immediately following migration is characterized by three distinct phases. The first is survival, or the satisfaction of basic needs. Secondly, cancellation of dissonance (or denial of the subjective impact of the new environment) is greatest precisely at the period in which the bombardment by dissonant experiences is also maximal. Denial of access to institutions and services, whether it is self-induced or is consequential, is associated with increased levels of distress (Roberts, 1980). Thirdly, while the overall field of consciousness is blurred or clouded (similar to a person who suffers a concussion), recently arrived migrants show a clear focus of attention-consciousness. During the first year after migration, concurrence of extreme circumstances and lack of coping skills can trigger: (1) massive crises; (2) family disorganization, and, (3) multiple somatic symptoms.

During the period immediately after migration, conflicts that exist within the family are not recognized, and symptoms remain dormant. The family tends to stay together. Previous family rules and styles tend to appear slightly exaggerated.

Migrants develop, as a moratorium technique, the myth that "they will return to Puerto Rico after a time in the States." Many migrants are skilled workers who, because of social problems at home , decide to come to the United States. Some see their stay on the mainland as temporary (Cheng, 1987). These migrants hope to move back to their Island home when things

improve. They say that, although they will work hard and follow the rules of the land, their hearts will always remain in Puerto Rico (Fitzpatrick, 1987). This attitude appears to be common among older adults.

On the other hand, many of the second generation children and young adults want to make the United States their home. Their loyalty to the mainland system often puts them in conflict with their parents. The adaptation process of second generation migrants tends to present particular problems to the children and to the receiving societies (Prewitt Díaz, 1987; Fitzpatrick, 1987).

One teenager discussed this issue:

> "It depends on how old you were when you left. Like, I was too young, and I feel as though my home is here, and I feel like I'm not migrant anymore. I feel this is my country, my city right here. But most people who left when they were older, they feel they should just live here for a short time and then forget it, return to Puerto Rico. And that's why they always think they should move back to Puerto Rico. They say, I just move here for a short time and then I move back when things get better for me over there. It depends how old they were when they left. But it depends really, I think on different people having different feelings. It's hard for them to accept a new culture when they have to change everything all around. But it's easy for me to change." (Interview 13).

Certain variables have an impact on the immigrants' lives, and assist in delineating the culture of migrancy. Among these variables are : 1) the lifestyles of the migrants; 2) their cultural background; 3) conditions of the old environment and reasons for leaving; 4) reasons for relocating in, and conditions of the new environment; and, 5) fulfillment of expectations and

dreams. These variables are intertwined and contribute to what has been termed the "migrant-stress" hypothesis (Maltzberg 1968; Parker et al, 1969).

> "I expressed surprise at their decision to leave a secure, well paying job to come here and work in the mushrooms. L said they left because there were no opportunities for her children in Ebonite. I asked her if, with the salary of a bank employee, they could not afford to send the children to college. She laughed and said "no" . She told me her husband was making enough for them to eat and have a decent life, but that was all. They had a house of their own back there. In Puerto Rico, school is free through high school, but after that they have to pay to attend the University". (Interview 82).

> "L seemed very proud of her two sons and was not afraid to show it. I asked her if she thought her boys would get better jobs with their high school diplomas. She said they could get good jobs in factories and things like that. But she really wanted them to go to college. SIEMPRE HE QUERIDO QUE TENGA SU CARRERA [I have always wanted them to have an education]. I asked her what they wanted to study if they went to college. L said both boys were very good at drawing. She thought they could be architects." (Interview 82).

Until it has been experienced, the physical and emotional isolation of the immigrants from the rest of the community where they are residing is hard to imagine. Migrants are almost invisible members of their communities. Puerto Rican neighborhoods tend to exist in the most dilapidated and neglected sections of towns and cities.

Migrants may be considered socially invisible, as well. Since Puerto Ricans are members of a different ethnic and minority group, it is hard to absorb them in a community. They rarely interact with members of the majority society,

thus nurturing the isolation. Local people try to keep the migrants at a distance.

In addition to being strangers, migrant children are often culturally different. Local children tend to ignore or pick on them. This reinforces their isolation.

Puerto Ricans recognize their social and civic isolation, and understand they are generally viewed as outsiders. They often speak of trying to get local people to recognize that immigrants aren't different from the local people. After all they, too, are American citizens. The world of the Puerto Rican is too often perceived as another world.

Twenty-five to thirty miles is the practical limit for migrants to explore or use services in their area. Beyond that distance, travel time and expense of getting somewhere and back, coupled with long work days and short nights, keeps them isolated. Only a dire emergency--usually medical in nature--causes them to travel farther. The practical distance to reach educational opportunities, whether regular school or summer programs, is often less than 25 to 30 miles.

A consistent element of the Puerto Rican migrant situation is the characteristic uncertainty of the move and its effect on family members. There are dozens of variables, out of the migrants' control, that affect their adjustment to the new environment. These include state of financial resources, limited knowledge of English, church, membership and the desire to find friends.

Waiting for one's "friend" to call and say that he or she has found a job

for you in Lancaster or York, can be trying for the whole family, and especially for the children in school. If the call comes soon, the family leaves before the children finish school. If the call does not come for some time, there may not be sufficient money to make the trip without going into debt. Or the family may miss the opportunity altogether. This uncertainty upsets the lives of migrants and their children, and produces a constant background theme that molds their view of the future.

> "M says it is difficult to plan for the future when one is a migrant. In Lancaster you have it good, but in Wilmington you may not have it so good." (Interview 63).

When immigrant families decide to move to find better living conditions, they begin a complex lifestyle that affects everyone in the family in drastic ways. The decision to migrate may be sparked by economic or health reasons, But the consequences of the move affect their social relationships, their health, their educational opportunities, and even their chances of survival in our society as well.

Due to their continual movement, itinerant Puerto Ricans must abandon and sacrifice desirable affiliation with institutions and organizations that sustain physical and emotional well-being. To established, settled members of the majority population, these affiliations remain readily available.

Often migrants struggle to establish associations and conditions that can provide them necessary social and emotional support and will buffer the effects of change. Migrants psychologically attach themselves to Puerto Rico, where

they have friends and family. Nicassio and Pate (1984) stress the importance of such social support and the preservation of the family unit.

This study brings to light debilitating characteristics of migrancy which add to human depression and anxiety. Such contributing conditions involve dependency on nature and others for employment, as well as the unpredictability of work in the inner city. Other influences include uncertainty of residence, underemployment and, at times, unemployment. These conditions lead to a sense of fatalistic control and a loss of efficacy.

Literature on Early Migration and its Consequences on the Puerto Rican

Enrique A Laguerre, a Puerto Rican scholar educated in the United States, presents three novels, with a psychological undertone: *La Ceiba en el Tiesto (1956), El Laberinto (1959), and El Fuego y su Aire (1970)*, explain the dilemma of early migration for the Puerto Rican. Laguerre had occasion to study the Puerto Rican immigrant in New York while he spent several years in that city. Laguerre indicated that, while he was in New York, he became very conscious of the Puerto Rican migrant. He characterized him or her as a person with poor academic background and an agrarian lifestyle, who decided to live and survive in one of the most advanced and industrialized countries in the world.

La Ceiba en el Tiesto

His novel "*La Ceiba en el Tiesto*" (1956) presents man imprisoned in his existence in the same way a cotton silk tree is in its pot, He seeks to liberate himself from the oppressive forces of his environment. The book also discusses specific problems encountered by Puerto Ricans on the mainland.

Gustavo Vargas, the main character, comes from a poor fishing village. He believes in the Nationalist movement, but without great conviction. While at the University, he joined a group called *Conjunto Patriotico*. *Gustavo*, together with two others, is supposed to assassinate a "big fish". He is not able to fulfill his mission and, being afraid of reprisals, decides to escape to New York.

At first glance, our hero *Gustavo*, appears to be the biggest coward. His ethnic origin as the son of a mestizo woman and a white father places him among two worlds, neither of which he considers his own. The way of life in the States, so different from his ambitions and temperament, make him feel caged like the "*Ceiba en el Tiesto*" (the cotton silk tree in the pot). This symbol is used by Laguerre to show the spiritual asphyxiation suffered by the Puerto Rican who migrates to the States.

Gustavo, our hero, has a difficult time adjusting to life on the mainland because he migrates as an adult. He arrived in New York without the least training in technological skills. Therefore, he must accept whatever is available in the job market. Further, he does not have a support system working for him on the mainland. He has no family or friends in the city. He was on a different

social level. His life evolves in various endeavors: factory worker, bohemian, vagabond, Latin lover, and painter.

The rejection suffered by *Gustavo,* aggravates him to the point of becoming a social nuisance. Wherever he went to seek employment he encountered the same reaction: "There is nothing here for you", "Why don't you turn around and go back to the same place where you came from?" The patronizing tone with which he was received became an affront to his Puertoricaness.

He understood that he symbolized all Puerto Ricans. This hurt him deeply. He became aware that if he, as a human being, could not control his future, he would not be able to help anyone else. Laguerre emphasizes in his book one of the major problems faced by Puerto Ricans in the United States: discrimination ("There is nothing here for you.").

Gustavo , the story's hero, upon arrival on the mainland, dressed up in his best clothes and went about the business of seeking employment. Some thieves recognized him as a new arrival and attempted to rob him. The thieves were surprised by the fact that *Gustavo* did not have any money. So the robbers beat him up.

Gustavo had dressed like a gentleman. To make a good impression, he had carried an elegant satchel, but he had no funds. The robbers, upset by not finding any money on *Gustavo,* assaulted him and told him, "This is so that next time you don't fool us". *Gustavo,* sat on a curb, confused by what had just

happened to him. In this moment of despair, *Gustavo* evokes fond memories of his homeland: Puerto Rico.

Soon after being robbed, *Gustavo* realizes that the mainland is not the haven sought by many of his countrymen. The hurried coming and going of people, rape of women, robberies, crowded conditions on the trains, and the horrid appearance of this city, make *Gustavo* lose the faith in finding a fruitfull new life. It was that dream that brought him to the United States. *Gustavo* exclaims: "From my tenth floor window, I can see the metropolitan jungle, grandiose and awesome. I ask myself: Where is the land of hope and freedom? Where is that lost land?"

While working in a factory, *Gustavo* meets two Puerto Rican brothers who had lived on the mainland for many years. They invite *Gustavo* to visit their home so that he can meet the rest of the family. *Doña María,* the mother of the two young men, while conversing with Gustavo, expresses with great melancholy, that she felt like "*La ceiba en el tiesto*" (a cotton silk tree in a pot). *Doña María* says: "I lived on the Island with a very large family in a small, crowded home. That was my home. There I had my brothers mother, uncles, aunts, and cousins. Here, I have nothing."

Gustavo had occasion to study the behavior patterns of his fellow Puerto Ricans. He found *Doña María* and her children preferred to live away from the Puerto Rican neighborhood. It was as though they were ashamed of their origin. They had changed their customs, folkways, mores, and foods. But *Doña María* retained the personality of the Puerto Rican woman. She regretted the changes

that she saw in her children. She felt those changes affected her spiritually.

One day the family invites *Gustavo* to go to Coney Island. A lot of Puerto Ricans patronize Coney Island. In this amusement center you mixed with all kinds of people. *Gustavo* finds the park to be distasteful. *Gustavo* describes his experience at Coney Island as follows, "I was deadly afraid that I might encounter someone who knew me. Everything was rambling, brutal and dirty. This was a composite of everything that is sick and unhealthy in man. There was an exhibition of abnormal beings, machines that ridiculed people, violent games, a wax museum that frightened you, and dirt, trash, many voices and distasteful noises. I was tempted to leave, but I was with my friends."

The Puerto Ricans who cannot adapt to the environment on the mainland create problems for themselves and friends. Their behavior makes other Puerto Ricans feel ashamed. *Gustavo's* friends are aware of the perceptions made by *Gustavo,* and express the following, "Those that are not able to live in the city will become waste in the Bowery and other low life places of the city". This would happen to *Gustavo.*

After several jobs and a hard time adapting to the United States, *Gustavo* sinks to a life of corruption and becomes a frequent patron of *Vicks Bar and Grill,* a Puerto Rican bar owned by Victor Martin. Frequent drunkenness got him to the point where he lost all sense of self respect. One morning he was the protagonist in a ridiculous spectacle. He was reciting some verses that attracted the attention of passers by:

"Gentes desorbitadas, caídos de otros mundos, tenazmente sufrimos nuestros sueños profundos marchamos ciegamente, con los ojos abiertos, sentimos impulso de llegar, pero vamos en un zig zag tan loco que apenas."

In spite of his drunkenness, the verses conveyed deep ideas that expressed the real feelings of the Puerto Rican. Overwhelmed by the problems imposed by this migratory process, the poet presents a vision of the emotional state of the Puerto Rican on the mainland. With these verses, Laguerre, the writer of this novel, lets the reader get a sense of or feeling for the frustration suffered by the Puerto Rican on the mainland. The clamor of *Gustavo* is the lament of thousands of Puerto Ricans who settled in the United States. It is the plaint of people that have suffered ridicule and slights, trying to break barriers that hinder the path toward better financial opportunities. It is this humiliation that forces a number of Puerto Ricans to become delinquent. Others are driven toward physical or emotional suicide, believing that this is the best way out of their problems.

Laguerre presents the level of desperation endured by the Islander as depicted in the following vignette. *Gustavo,* our hero, is found depressed, walking down the street. He looks up, and sees a painter in a sixty story building. There was a sign offering jobs for this sort of thing. *Gustavo* thought that working as a painter would be the best way to end his depression. He got the job. and while he painted, he was planning. A man from Poland, who was working beside him read his terrible intention in his facial expressions. A simple question from the Polish man brought *Gustavo* back to his senses, "Do you have children?" *Gustavo* (who was suffering from a spiritual emptiness, common to

many Puerto Ricans who have abandoned the Island and their families to come to the United States seeking well-being), finds psychological support in this worker. He responds to the human warmth that he sorely needed and to the timely hand that saved him from suicide.

This worker of Polish origin had not only saved *Gustavo's* life, but taught him how to wash windows. At noontime he shared his lunch and a jacket so that *Gustavo* could warm up. That evening they said good-bye as though they were life-long friends.

Laguerre refers to the brutal winters. *Gustavo* , after a strong snowfall, goes to work wearing only very light clothes. When he is painting, he realizes the bite of the cold weather in his hands. That morning he had not eaten breakfast and the clothing he had on didn't protect him very well. He ends up in the hospital with a case of pneumonia.

Upon leaving the hospital, *Gustavo* goes back to his drunken habits. This time he associates with the bohemian life of the Bowery. He becomes a panhandler. One day he asks a fellow Puerto Rican for a dollar. The Puerto Rican gives him the dollar but tells him, "Get away from here. This is for Americans. Our poverty is of another type."

As the words of the Polish worker had saved him from committing suicide the advice from this Puerto Rican helped him to break away from the period of inactivity that had stifled him for so long. The only way to improve yourself is to leave this humiliating place and go where voters and taxpayers make their

homes, he tells himself. *Gustavo* has begun to find the meaning of life. To achieve this feat, he had to break away from this empty feeling of being alone in the world that was depressing him so. *Gustavo* exclaims, "I have finally mastered this nightmare. I feel that someone gave me a friendly hand until I managed to rehabilitate myself, and I survived this terrible experience. It is like waking up from a bad dream."

Gustavo , with the help and assistance of many people, became a part of a city and an environment that he had thought unobtainable. He began to lose the sensation of orphanhood that anguished him. After constant migration by *Gustavo* , he begins to realize that the psychic emptiness that he suffered can only be filled through constant effort in the new surroundings.

Don José, a migrant who has lived on the mainland for many years, convinced that the place of every Puerto Rican is on the Island, invites *Gustavo* to return to the Island. *Don José* says, "life on our Island is a long story of fear and hunger that must be stopped." José returns to Puerto Rico and writes often to *Gustavo* to keep him informed of current conditions there. A short time later, *Gustavo* returns to Puerto Rico. *Gustavo* was convinced that "there is no other way of attaining freedom, but through acts of living with and for others." *Gustavo* focuses on new objectives for his life and dedicates his efforts to working with his people to achieve social reformation.

Laguerre has researched and described the plight of the Puerto Rican in the United States faithfully. He continues to share with the reader the feelings of scholars of his time. He positions the Puerto Ricans in the mainland United

States, where they face adjustment problems that torment them until their desperation is intolerable. When man is at the point of succumbing, he discovers the security of human compassion and encouragement. The characters in Laguerre's novel are full of warmth, and when facing the hard realities that confront them in the United States, these people continue to be genuine Puerto Ricans.

El Laberinto

Another literary work by Laguerre, *"El Laberinto"* (The Labyrinth), is worth noting in this chapter. The story presents a man lost in a labyrinth composed of an egotistical conception of the human being in interaction with the world. In this novel our hero is *Porfirio Uribe*, from Coamo. He migrates to the United States after his uncle's death. His parents had worked in a circus, but died while performing a trapeze act. His protector leaves him an old bombardine, which he keeps at his side at all times as his only companion.

On the ship carrying him to the mainland, he meets an individual by the name of *Alfredo Laza*, a vanquished nationalist who had traveled to the mainland on several occasions. *Porfirio* was listening to the distant sounds of ships in the harbor while *Laza* was reminiscing about the many times he had made the trip back and forth accompanied by poor migrants. He recalled that he had not returned to Puerto Rico voluntarily the last time. Because he had participated in a politically motivated riot, he had been sentenced to federal penitentiary. Once out of jail, he decides to return to New York.

Laguerre provides us with a vivid description of Puerto Rican immigrants.

He gives an accounting of the way they dress, their holidays, and the bets made to see who can predict the arrival date of the ship. He gives an accounting of the different kind of medicinal plants that people brought from the Island to their relatives in the United States, and describes the anguish of leaving the Island for the United States.

In the ship there persisted a strong smell of medicinal plants. There was an overriding odor of *anamu, santamaría y hierba luisa* (herbs used for medicinal baths). The travelers were bringing them as gifts for relatives on the mainland. There were fantastic parties every night with the music of *el cuatro* and the guitar. But nobody could get *Porfirio* to take out his bombardine.

Upon their arrival, customs officers harassed the new migrants, who spoke little or no English. The officials didn't seem concerned with the herbs. Nor were they surprised with the packages brought by the migrants. However, Laguerre tells us, one agent became fascinated with *Porfirio*'s package. The custom officer made him take out the instrument. Using *Alfredo* as an interpreter, he is told to play the bombardine. Since the instrument had so many holes, the sounds were terrible. The customs officers laughed at *Porfirio* but he continued playing his broken instrument because he didn't know better. For *Porfirio* this was a rite of passage. Welcome to the United States!

While in New York our hero *Porfirio*, suffers many abuses from strangers. He meets another Puerto Rican by the name of *Louis Pororico*. *Louis* was a well known underworld figure in the Puerto Rican community. One day *Louis* saw *Porfirio* walking down the street. He yelled at him "*¿Dónde es el entierro?*"

(Where is the funeral?), a phrase used to ridicule someone who is overdressed.. *Porfirio*, tired of the jeers, takes his bombardine and hits *Louis Pororico*. At last, *Porfirio* was no longer a docile Puerto Rican.

Alfredo Laza and *Porfirio* went to Harlem looking for an apartment and they found a place in a boarding house. *Porfirio* became a musician in house of ill repute run by *Louis Pororico*. Soon *Porfirio* and *Alfredo* move to the Village. This was the beginning of four years of hustling in the city.

Laguerre discusses some of the problems of recent arrival Puerto Ricans in the United States. The first is the prejudice faced by the Puerto Ricans. Laguerre airs a series of very common phrases: "Pororican Ah?", "They do not see that it is a Puerto Rican?", "Why doesn't the Health Department sweep them out of the country?". "They walk funny, these Pororicans," "The Pororicans, they are selling apples in the street."

In the meantime, our hero *Porfirio* was freezing in his apartment. The heaters were not working, so he filled the bathtub with hot water and went into it to warm up. Once the water cooled off, he came out and shivered for a long while. By the time *Alfredo* came back to the apartment, *Porfirio* had contracted pneumonia. He expressed strong concern about passing away on the mainland. Laguerre takes this opportunity to discuss the feelings of Puerto Ricans about dying in the United States. *Porfirio* was troubled about what would be done with his body when he died. He made *Laza* and *Louis* Pororican promise that they would ship his corpse back to Puerto Rico. *Porfirio* didn't want his body to freeze in a cemetery in the North. *Porfirio* decides that, as soon as he gets out

of the hospital, he needs to buy an insurance that will pay for his trip back to the Island when he dies. *Porfirio* exclaims, "I would be ashamed if a collection has to be made in the community to buy a casket to send me to Puerto Rico."

The theme of the reason for migration emerges once again. Laguerre indicates what must be done by many Puerto Ricans who have migrated in an attempt to improve their economic well-being but are unable to find jobs. Faced by social difficulties for which they are ill prepared, they resort to public welfare. Or even worse to acts of delinquency. The social circumstances faced by Puerto Ricans, as reported by Laguerre, are: unemployment, prejudice, inadequate housing and the language barrier, and bad attitudes of other groups of people in the mainland. In the case of *Porfirio*, our hero, he went to work with *Louis Pororico*, as a musician. But when things went bad for Louis, *Porfirio*'s live style changed. He became a bouncer, and a runner for the "*numbers game*" (la bolita), until he was arrested for disturbing the peace.

Laguerre relates a success story in *Porfirio*. He managed to break from the sordid life with *Louis Pororico* and got a job with the post office. He worked and went to school at night and finally graduated with a degree in law. But, even then, we see our hero being dragged into a murder. Laguerre portrays *Porfirio* on his way to graduation, when he encounters an assassination. He tells the reader, " I was driving down the street, two men were running away, and *Doña Rosana* and Isabel flagged me down. *Rosana* took me to the scene of the gruesome murder. As I stood there, the police came. The police thought that *Rosana* and I had been the perpetrators of such tragedy. It was logical to the cops: *Porfirio* had killed this man for the love of *Rosana*". After his arrest, as he

is being driven down to the police station, *Porfirio* thinks about the eight years it took him to prepare himself to become a credit to society. The police only see another Puerto Rican. "Why doesn't the Department of Sanitation sweep them out of the country?" Finally he was cleared of criminal charges with help of friends from law school.

El fuego y su aire

The third novel by Laguerre which deals with early migration is entitled *El fuego y su aire* (1970)(The fire and its air). This is the story of the spiritual history of a young man, *Pedro José Esposito*, who finds his identity in the streets of the big city. *Pedro José* came to the United States as a young child. Soon thereafter he was taken away from his parents by Children and Youth Services. In the novel we find that, 21 years later, *Pedro José* has suffered some kind of amnesia which keeps him from remembering his past. For the first several months he was very quiet. Then, the first words that came from his mouth were "Puerto Rico".

Laguerre relates that *Pedro José* would light small pieces of candle and put them in a glass to see how the flame was extinguished. As *Pedro José* saw the flame die out, his whole body ached with sadness. He knew that he needed a bigger candle with a stronger wick. Laguerre makes the analogy that the life of a migrant is like a candle. The lack of air would make it die. As for *Pedro JOSE* , he found the air that he needed to stay alive in the foster home. Early on, Father Fabian, the director of the home, realized that *Pedro José* had a keen ear for music. *Pedro José* was so talented that he was offered a scholarship to a music school. Once he had completed school, he went out into

the world. He knew two words: Puerto Rico. Laguerre tells us that *Pedro José* felt like an aborigine in a modern civilization.

The psychologist who evaluated *Pedro José* in the home had declared him a Puerto Rican, so he had a point of reference from which to begin his search for himself. *Pedro José* walks around the streets of New York trying to identify the faces of the Puerto Ricans. He was attempting to study the behavior and the ways of his people. He wanted to discover gestures, behaviors, attitudes, and some physical characteristics that were common to all Puerto Ricans. However, all he found were terms of criticism toward Puerto Ricans: "You sucker, dumb Pororican..." "You sucker, sucker, sucker, Pororican.."

Pedro José lived in a Puerto Rican household. Through his eyes, we get a description of the Puerto Rican family on the mainland. *José Luis Villa* was the "chief" of the house. He always showed himself as proud to be Puerto Rican. He used to say, " I came here from Lari (Lares), and I will die in Lari (Lares)." *Carmen*, his wife, was born in Aguadilla. She stayed in constant touch with the family in Puerto Rico. She shared with her husband news of industrial progress reported on the Island. Their children, *Jeanette* and *Luis*, had been born in the United States.

Pedro José observes, "They didn't know what they really were". *Carmen*'s brother represents the Puerto Rican who has introjected the American society and culture. He began to see himself as different from other Puerto Ricans. He made fun of the recent arrivals, without recalling that he himself had come under similar conditions not too long ago. He said of the *jíbaros* that just

arrived, "They seem to be wrapped in inappropriate bandages." The grandmother, *Doña* Maruja, represented all the sentiments of the land left behind. She confides in *Pedro José* the nostalgia of leaving something very dear to her heart. She shared some verses with him: "People form the mountains that shine like pearls by the sea."

Pedro José , in a final analysis, tells us that there are many Puerto Ricans on the mainland who disown themselves from the traditional Puerto Rican experience. They forget the Spanish language, change their names, and adopt a different ethnic heritage. Laguerre in this novel presents episodes which give the reader a faithfull portrait of the Puerto Rican's early migration experience.

Laguerre reports on the reception tendered to Puerto Ricans in the early stages of migration. The guiding rule for Puerto Rican migrants was that they were to remember always that they are "migrants". This means that you have to accept conditions as you find them. Finally, Laguerre shares with the writer the Puerto Rican reality. Puerto Ricans have for years embraced a fantasy, which is a reality not understood. The blind migration of the Puerto Rican is indicative of the hopeless despair felt on the Island.

Psychological injury is increased by the over-valorization of dreams brought about with the experience of migration. The neuroses of migration by Puerto Ricans is greater than that of other groups which have migrated in the twentieth century. One finds decisions made in a primitive environment, the *barrios* (neighborhoods) of Puerto Rico, where even entire barrios have

migrated to the United States. They have become prisoners of economic needs, of the cosmetic perception that all is well, of the attraction of plastic products. The Puerto Rican people need air to feed the fire of their lives, regardles of whether, in so doing, the person must leave the Island.

Summary:

This chapter presents symptoms associated with the early migration experience, and the overcompensatory behaviors of the Puerto Rican migrant. The latter part of the chapter presents the reality of the early Puerto Rican migration as dedicated by Enrique Laguerre in three of his novels.

CHAPTER 5

MIGRATION: THE PERIOD OF DECOMPENSATION

Once a person, or the family, has lived on the mainland for some time (usually over two years), a period of decompensation begins. This is a stormy interval characterized by conflict, symptoms of physical and mental illness, and difficulties with family members, friends, and neighbors. Migrants begin to reshape the new reality during this period. At this time, they realize that they previously had been operating out of a figment of their imagination living, a lie. The new coping skills are not based on the conception they had developed upon originally arriving on the mainland. This period is characterized by an attempt to assure family continuity in terms of identity and its compatibility with the environment.

The crisis usually hits the family through their children. Children tend to catch up with a new culture and language (verbal and nonverbal), quicker than their parents. The relationship between the children and the school unleashes a clash of values and styles that strikes at the very core of the family.

There is a realization that family rules and values which were effective on the Island, may prove to be less adaptive in the culture and surroundings of the States. The effect of the strengths and weaknesses of the family coping

mechanism (in the context of the new culture) is cumulative, and it will express itself in the course of the migratory period.

For the family to change and to adapt to the United States mainland there is a need to revise the rules. For one thing, the process of decompensation requires that families define the rules about changing rules. Some regulations might prove adaptive in both cultures. Other rules will undergo changes which affect distribution of roles and norms. This process involves all members of the family. Some rules will be retained at the expense of a certain degree of alienation, They are enforced because they become central to the identity of the family (cohesive ritual).

There are two sets of rules: instrumental and affective. The instrumental guides are those that assist the person or the family to connect to the current environment. The affective rules permit the family to maintain a certain affiliation with the Island. They promote sustained connection with the previous environment through letters, phone calls, and lamentations for what has been left behind. The family member who sets the affective formulas maintains a relative isolation and becomes more noticeable by comparison. The more isolation by a family member, the more acute the crisis. This results because there is a relative ignorance of the norms and customs of the environment.

As the crisis escalates to the breaking point, the post-oriented member becomes free from the fixed roles. The family member that assumes a functional role learns how to cope, and discovers untapped abilities to deal with the environment and to plan for the future. The woman will usually find an unskilled

job more easily than the man, thus challenging the traditional family structure. The man will then have a tendency to develop somatic symptoms or become depressed.

Some families emerge from the process three to four years later with new individual and collective strengths. Others romanticize what they have left behind in Puerto Rico. The major interpersonal crisis is crystallized into a socially accepted complaint: somatic or psychiatric problems.

Role Relationships of Migrants

Interviews, conducted or studied by the author, reveal the roles and norms for social behavior of migrant men, women, and children. These roles and norms for social conduct quickly became evident as the researcher observed and recorded social interactions of migrant men, women, and children with one another and with social institutions they encountered. These interactions are categorized as "ideals" of proper behavior, called roles.

Performance of all functions usually associated with a role is considered to be appropriate behavior. Failure to behave as expected can cause confusion, distrust, and ostracism. Migrants were interviewed to determine what they consider to be proper and improper performance of the roles of husband, wife, parent, and child. An understanding of the roles and rules of migrant behavior is especially valuable for mental health professionals working with Puerto Rican recent arrivals.

Gender Roles

Human societies may be said to assign work and behavioral roles according to two major characteristics: gender and age. Gender and age determine behavior at home as well as in the workplace. The effect these variables have on social behavior varies from culture to culture. In some cultures, there are very clear distinctions between "women's work" and "men's work." In other cultures, the distinction is not as clearly defined.

Gender roles among migrants differ according to the cultural background of the family. In most cases, women are expected to work in unskilled jobs and do home-making chores. Occasionally men help with household duties, as do the children. However, men and boys are usually exempt from responsibilities of "keeping house".

> The following statement is typical of many made by females migrant:
> "Women have a harder time. When they get home from work, they have to cook dinner, and wash, and iron the clothes. Sometimes the men cooperate, but sometimes they don't." (Interview 43).

The "ideal" role behavior changes dependent upon time, place, and circumstance. The transformation in gender roles in the United States, as a whole, are very visible over the past 20 years. The interviewer observed a significant difference in female role behavior in Pennsylvania between recently arrived Puerto Rican women and second generation women. Prior to accompanying their husbands to the mainland, many women had never done

factory work. However, Hispanic women, whose parents had worked as factory laborers in the U.S., frequently had work experience which started at a very young age. One woman shared the following account:

> Mrs. C: "We got married, and we came to Lancaster. My father had already been here for several years".
> Interviewer: "Where did your father work?"
> Mrs. C: "My father had worked in agriculture. But, after ten years, he got a job in the chicken processing plant. My husband and I came to live in his house. He found a job for us in the plant. My husband worked there for five years and then went to work at Donnelly." (Interview 42).

This is contrasted with the multiple generation migrant families in the U.S., as summarized from an interview in Chester:

> "Amelia comes from a migrant family. Her father was a crew leader and all of her brothers are crew leaders now. When she came with her father as a child, the main crop here was peaches. Now she and her family work in the mushroom plant." (Interview 108).

Marriage at a young age is common for migrants and even more prevalent for female migrants. For most migrants, especially females, marriage signals the end of educational opportunities. A few young men stay in school; women commonly do not. Marriage at the age of 15 or 16 effectively eliminates young women from education and traps them in poverty.

This author observes that, once people get married, that's usually the end of formal education. Women have less chance to learn. However, I think both

men and women have equal access to education. There are notable differences between cultures. Puerto Ricans drop out of school to get married, Anglos and blacks may not get married. But, when they become pregnant, they stay in school until they get their diplomas.

It is not only women who suffer. The assumption of adult roles for both sexes comes with marriage. In most migrant families there is strong pressure for the males to support the family, whereas females are expected to have children, keep house, and provide additional economic support. These complementary roles assist young migrant couples to survive. However, they severely limit the chance for educational success and career advancement.

The following interview with migrant teenage girls summarizes their expectations and the realities the future holds for many of them:

> Question: "How do you see yourselves and your families?,Your own families? Do you see yourselves as having a life similar to your parents?"
> Answer: "No, hopefully not".
> Question: "What is so bad about the lifestyle your parents have? They are feeding you, and they have a house".
> Answer: "I guess you just want a better life for your kids, so they don't have to depend on SSI because it's hard. You want them to finish school, get a good job".
> Question: "Why wouldn't you want to have the kind of life your parents have?"
> Answer: "It's so hard".
> Question: "But you make money".
> Answer: "But, I mean in case you get married, and have your own

children, you don't want them to go through what you had to go through. Because it was hard work for you and you don't want ..... you tell them how much you worked and how difficult it was".

Question: "Do your parents tell you, 'I don't want you to have to do what I did'?"

Answer: "Yes. They say, 'we want you all to get a good education, so you can get a husband that don't depend on welfare, and you can get a better job than we are doing".

Question: "So the key is also to get a husband who does not work in an unskilled job. Because if he works in an unskilled job, what happens to you?"

Answer: "You, also, will have an unskilled job". (Interview 72).

Adult/Child Roles

All cultures differentiate between adult roles and the behavior that is expected of children. At differing ages, children start to change their behavior and adopt adult roles. Adults begin to accept those changes and to reward them by modifying their behavior toward the children. In the United States, we legally recognize some changes at about age 18, and other changes at age 21. In the Puerto Rican migrant culture, males and females achieve adult status at a much younger age.

In many families, boys begin to be treated as adults at age 15 or 16. They can earn as much in the fast food industry or on the streets as their father does. Girls start being treated as adults when they are capable of having children and when they can manage a household. Differences between the role expectations of the dominant society and those of migrant families create complications for educational programs. The following account is typical of

some of the roles children assume at a fairly early age, which can have consequences for their education:

> "I have a little 7th grader, Yamaira. She is a little manipulator [laughs], but she knows the system and she knows how to work it to her advantage. She is the eldest in her family. She just has a younger sister. Her mother has since remarried and that's where the little sister came from. The mother is attending adult English classes and the father works at a packing plant".
>
> "She's been in the U.S maybe between 18 months to 2 years. Not actually a long time. She assumes a lot of responsibility there in the home. She is the contact in terms of serving as translator. They have only one car, so she does a great deal of the grocery shopping by walking to the store. It's about a half mile walk for her. But she also bears a lot of responsibility in terms of baby-sitting, while the mother's in class and things like that. The mother is very friendly. She speaks very little English, and when we make home visits, again, she voices concerns about whether or not daughter, Yamaira is in school. She worries about her behavior, and things like that. Now the 7th grader has to do a lot of translating for her. So there have been times when the student has come to class and asked us questions like, you know 'How do I say that our phone bill is not correct? Or that I want to disconnect this?' She's had to grow up quite quickly, but she is a very sociable person. And it's kind of fun to go through those teenage times with them. She's discovered boys, and her English has suddenly become a lot better in terms of survival here -everything she needs to say to them. She has a positive environment at home. There is a caring family there". When migrant children have developed beyond combined adult/child roles, they progress to older child status and eventually begin to work.

Maritza has not had a job since she came to York. She said that she does not want to leave the children alone in the house. The boys are very active and she is afraid of what they might do, if they were alone all day long. She added that they are too young but, when they are old enough, she would be looking for a training program". (Interview 45).

"Jessica is fourteen years old. She is very understanding and knows she needs to help her mother with the younger children. Her mother says the daughter likes to help her because, at the end of the month, she gives her a little money to buy clothes. Her mother keeps her check and gives her some money back. When they are in debt, the mother uses the SSI money until they are done paying their debts". (Interview 65).

"One of the attractions of working in the summer with LIRA for teenagers is the money they earn and often are allowed to keep for themselves. The amount they keep, or give to the family, varies from household to household. Recent arrival girls often give most of their earnings to the family. Second generation girls retain more money for themselves to help cover their personal needs. Young people who have worked in the summer usually pay for some or all of their clothes with their earnings". (Interview 67).

If the family is successful in securing money from SSI, or welfare, and food stamps, there is a major pull out of school and into a permanent lifestyle which keeps them tied to the traditional customs and mores from the Island culture.

The relationship of migrant to institutions

One of the important things we are taught as members of our culture is how to deal with social institutions. (We refer to educational systems, health care networks, and social service agencies which we have created as a part of our complex society). In many cases, survival depends on how well we can "work the system". Recent arrivals, can be at a serious disadvantage, especially those who come from a linguistic and cultural background differing from the people who run those agencies. The following sections describe how

Puerto Rican migrants view "the system," and how they attempt, or fail, to cope with it.

Dependence vs. Independence

Initially migrants strive to be independent of the "system." This goal to be independent is contrary to a number of stereotyped impressions of migrants.

> Don Manolo's family very seldom depended on outside agencies for help. They took pride in the fact that they could work, and immediately sought jobs when arriving in Lancaster . Occasionally, especially when they first arrived and did not have money, they relied on the "mantengo" (government food giveaway).
> "Don Manolo was asked why, even now that he is older, he does not accept help from the government. He expressed his desire to work and not be a burden on the government. He told me that there were people who needed help more than he did". (Interview 34).

Yet this independence has its limits. Everyone needs help, of one type or another, at some time. For the Puerto Rican, this occasional need for help is complicated by the fact they are strangers to the community.

When Puerto Ricans needed help, and were fortunate enough to have obtained government housing, many depended on their children to make phone calls and take them places in emergencies. Many migrants, when experiencing problems with their children, did not seek outside help. Often they did not know who could help them with their troubles. Some reported that they needed more counselors in the schools so that their children could have someone to talk to.

Powerlessness: Being Stuck in the Migrant Cycle

Although Puerto Rican parents express much support for education for their children, there is also a feeling that the cycle of migration may be very hard to break. There is fear that their children may end up following in their footsteps, regardless of anything they say or do.

One mother put it this way:

"I want Pedro to learn English, and to work hard in school, and finish so he doesn't have to live off public assistance. My husband and I didn't complete school, and so we have to work in janitorial service. But he can get out, if he goes to school. If you learn in school, it's better. He says he doesn't like it, but he doesn't like to work either. Last year he worked a little bit after school. But it's too much work." (Interview 101).

A woman who has been living in Reading for twelve years indicates:

"Two of my daughters finished high school. One went to college and got her diploma in secretarial science. She doesn't have a job yet as a secretary. Another has filed an application in Meridian Bank, because she would like to be a bank teller. Oh, but the other three daughters didn't finish high school. They all stopped in the 11th grade. They all got married in the 11th grade . My husband and I just went to the 4th grade, because we had to help our parents work. I don't think families have to do that now." (Interview 105).

The Puerto Ricans' realistic appraisal of the system, and their understanding that they may be trapped, is incorrectly viewed as apathy by members of the majority community who have occasion to interface with this population.

A feeling of being powerless is also evident in some of the persons interviewed. Many parents feel that they would not be listened to if they spoke out. Furthermore, they are perplexed by the school's adherence to rules and regulations at the expense of providing necessary services. For Example:

> "A lot of the parents are working parents and keep their children home, you know, once in a while, to baby-sit or something or other, so they don't have to miss work".(Interview 272)

However, not everyone expressed hopelessness. Mothers are the staunch supporters of education. They want something better for their children. Sometimes their hope and support has been rewarded. The following interview expresses that hope, however tenuous, of a mother in a mushroom farm in Douglasville:

> Mother: "Ah, I would like it if my children did not have to work in the mushrooms plants like we are. Because, look now, we are working in here twelve hours a day. I think it's the hardest; look at the blisters I have. I tell my husband, 'I wouldn't like my children to go like this, sweating'. And he says, 'They don't have a crown. They have to do what we do. 'But I don't believe that.(Interview 36).

Attitudes towards/Teacher Authority

Puerto Ricans generally have positive attitudes towards authority, especially towards schools. However, this attitude is occasionally expressed in a way that is culturally confusing to school personnel. Since parents trust the schools to know what is right for their children, many Puerto Ricans do not see a need to participate in their child's education in the same way that an Anglo

parent would. For example, some migrants consider having conferences with the teacher, and asking an instructor about the educational program, an inappropriate challenge to the teacher's authority and prestige. Some of the teachers recognize this and try to overcome it.

Teaches are held in very high regard on the Island. The fact is that Puerto Rican mothers and fathers will not come to school to question anything, even though a child may be placed in special education because of language problems. Parents recognize this, but they're not going to say anything because they fear the system. It's just not traditional for them to go up to a teacher and challenge them. And that is, specifically, with education. As I see it, I think there's just a real sense of being uncomfortable, of being too visible. And, it's not within their culture to do that.

Many parents have expressed confusion at being asked their opinion. Their opinion was that "the schools know best". Otherwise, what use was there for of all the education the school personnel themselves had?

The negative contention that parents do not get involved with the school or the education of their children has been recorded in impressionistic literature. Almost always, these writing lack understanding of the above attitude.

A teacher in Lancaster indicated that one big problem was not being able to get in touch with parents:

"They don't have phones at home. I send notes to parents, but get no response.

> We are not getting to them. We need more contact with adults. When parents do come to school, they are very respectful; they are concerned. Some parents are fearful of teachers. They are almost mute for a while until you put them at ease." (Interview 63)

One of the barriers to address is the fact that most professionals in school and other agencies are of a different color, speak English, and have a better education. Puerto Ricans sometimes feel or think that teachers and other professionals are "looking down on them".

Migrants advance several different excuses for lack of parental involvement. Such reasons keep them from approaching schools.

> "*Doña Carmen* says teachers send her notes in English about the progress of her children, but she does not speak English. She says she doesn't go to school when they call her, because there's nobody there to translate. Many times she doesn't have anybody to take her". (Interview 95).

Another migrant mother explained that the reason parents didn't go to meetings was that most of the meetings were in English. And they didn't understand what was going on. This was verified at a meeting held by the school board in the Reading School District. One of the purposes of the meeting was to enable the school board to receive input on their proposed bilingual education program. The room was filled with Puerto Rican parents, and the chairman of the board began speaking in English. After 10 minutes, someone stopped her and told her that they wanted to translate for the parents. She was very surprised, and announced that she didn't realize they were going to translate.

Language is not the only problem. One lady reported that she didn't attend meetings, because every time she participated in PTA meetings, the discussion addressed issues which were not pertinent to her or her children. On one occasion, she relates that a gentleman spoke against Puerto Ricans because , in his view, they have damaged the quality of education in the City. She showed me a copy of an article that came out in the morning paper headlined, "School Board discusses the Puerto Rican problem".

Migrant parents are willing to admit that moving interferes with their offspring's education, and some have made a conscious effort to adapt their lifestyles to the requirements of school attendance. Gerónimo said they stopped moving, so that the children could go to one school and not have to be changing schools constantly:

> "If you move them, they don't learn. They just miss too much. They need to study, because if they don't, they are always going to be picking mushrooms". (Interview 83).

For everybody, education is valuable. Certainly, it is for all of our children; because at some time or other, knowledge becomes very important. Presently there are young people, illiterates who cannot read or write. To know how to protect themselves, they need to learn how to speak English in order to work. This is necessary, no matter what kind of work we are able to find and whether we are young, mature, or old people. We know that.

Most of the time, parents want for their children something better than they themselves achieve. They see education as one means to that end.

Maritza shared with the interviewer the fact that she had not completed her education:

> "I didn't finish school, but now I got kids that are doing pretty good in school. Joshua is getting straight A's. The rest? Well, they were doing pretty good, but two of 'em got married. One went up to high school a couple of years and then got involved with his girlfriend. They had to quit school and they never went back again. He don't have his GED, but he needs it bad. See, if you have that piece of paper, then you can get a real permanent job." (Interview 76).

Genaro says,

> "I didn't wanna be a laborer all my life, you know? I don't want to be a laborer all my life. But it's hard to tell your kids that. 'Just keep up with your schooling and maybe you'll have a better chance in your life than washing dishes or cooking hamburgers'. Trying to reach something better for them." (Interview 112).

Migrants often talk to their children about the importance of studying so that they will have opportunities.

For the recent arrival, the key to success in breaking the migrant cycle, (i.e. settling for a job in the factory) is for their children to learn to speak and write English. With these skills, they can learn a trade and not be bound to the fast-food places. Some are convinced that children need a degree from high school in order to have a good job. Without exception, migrants interviewed wanted their children to have an education.

Unfortunately, the desire to see their children study and get an education, many times conflicts with the economic necessities of the family. One girl, an

excellent student, was forced to quit high school because her mother was sick and couldn't work or take care of the home. The father was not living with the family. The daughter found it necessary to take over her mother's place in the household.

Economic pressures on older children are enormous, as can be seen from the following quote from a student who dropped out:

> "But this dropout thing, for other kids, that's a tough one. A lot of times it's money troubles. If your family has financial problems, they may need you to drop out. You can see your family growing, and little brothers and sisters running around all over the place, and there's pressure to help out". (Interview 112)

Parents recognize the value of higher education. An interesting point, which came out of interviews with many generation migrants, is the fact that they believe a high school diploma is often not sufficient to get a good job. If their children are going to get good jobs, they will need a trade or college education.

EDUCATION versus THE SCHOOLS

While migrants value education, "schools" all too often were seen in a negative light by parents who would otherwise have been supportive of their child's education. Parents were normally very appreciative when the school contacted them about their children. However, many mentioned that contact was made only when the child was doing poorly or causing problems in school.

> One mother pointed this out in an interview: She says that she has visited with Paula's teachers on many occasions. She has always found them to be very nice and understanding. All of her trips to school involved some problem with Paula, either falling grades or some complaint about her behavior. Or, on one occasion, Paula's complaint to her mother that one of the teachers had mistreated her. On this occasion Sra. Pepa went to the teacher to find out what had happened. She was told that Paula must have misunderstood what the teacher meant, because the teacher said that she "would never treat anybody that way and that she likes Paula; she's a good girl." Sra. Pepa can't remember what it was that had upset Paula at the time, but was satisfied that the teacher meant no harm, and the issue had been resolved.(Interview 281)

The mother of one boy suspended from high school told the interviewer that she didn't know why they had suspended her son. As a result of this suspension and other absences, he lost all of his credits for the year. The mother called the school to find out why he had been suspended. She was put on hold by someone in the school for 20 minutes.

> "I had to take care of the baby, so I hung up. The youngsters can't say anything to the teachers or they will suspend them. I don't understand why they don't just give them more work, more homework, instead of removing them from the class or suspending them from school." (interview 139).

In this case, the interviewer talked to the boy and was told he was suspended because his teacher told him that he was not going to amount to anything "just like his parents". The boy got angry and yelled at the teacher. He would not tell his parents why he was suspended, because he didn't want to hurt their feelings.

Parents expressed concern for the safety of girls:

> "When I asked again why her three daughters had dropped out of school, *Doña* Celia said she'd tell me the real reason. Her husband said he took the girls out of school and sent them to work because he was afraid of the bad influences they were exposed to in school. The girls were older and very attractive, and the boys were very bold with them. He worried all the time until they got home from school." (Interview 18).

And there are times when nothing is wrong with the relationship between students and schools. The pursuit of education simply becomes a victim of the home environment and the children's desire to escape. Betty told me how many migrant kids her age are dropping out of school and not finishing:

> "I see a lot of 14 year old girls that are already married or run away and get pregnant, like that. Why is that going on? Sometimes it's the parents. They just want to get out of the house cause they don't like the parents and they run away. I know a lot of girls that ran away and now they are back with their families cause they didn't make it. What's so bad about living with their parents? Well, one girl got married because she said that her father treated her real bad. So they just go away cause they don't like the parents; so they go and get married..." (Interview 56).

Arriving after the school year has begun, or arriving just before school is over, is especially difficult for children. Students often pressure their parents to let them go back to Puerto Rico, or vice versa, to start school early. Parents of older children seem generally supportive of the idea and, make arrangements for their older children to return with relatives.

Who Makes the Educational Decisions

At some point, usually during their teenage years, second generation children are faced with a decision of whether to stay in school and complete their education, or to take advantage of their growing economic contribution in the jobs in their community and drop out. The decision process has a number of facets and involves the presence or absence of adult support for the child's education, the child's self image, and the child's prior experience and current status in school.

Parental and Adult Influence

Every child who successfully completed education had at least one person in the family who supported and encouraged the student. Sometimes this was a parent who was determined that the child would not continue the same hard life he or she had. Many times it was another important family member, usually a sibling, or even a grandparent, aunt, or uncle. That person made a critical difference in the child's academic success. Some of the following quotes show the influence that parents may have on the child. A recent high school graduate told the interviewer:

> "See my dad, he's the kind of dad who, I don't know how to say it in English, *pero le da el apoyo, sabes*? He really gives you a lot. He says, 'You wanna go to college? Go! If you have time for this, then you have time for that. Just take it slow and do it right. Don't hurry with it or you might mess up and get frustrated, or you might miss something.' He really helps out a lot, with as much money as he can. Like with Clarisa, a sister in college, he helps her as much as he can with money. And she works, too, in the summer so she can help pay. But he also just helps you out by encouraging you." (Interview 66)

In many cases, the parental influence over the child's education appears to revolve around respect for authority. This respect is a value held by many Puerto Rican families. Another influence is recognition of the one who controls the resources that support the children.

Some parents hold the basic view that children may make decisions that affect their own lives. Some parents determine an age when they would let children begin to make their own decisions. In many cases the children were given the opportunity to work at an early age, but the pressure to complete school was maintained.

> "Yes, we think that it is important to finish school. We are interested in having them finish. We want them to go to the University. They have uncles who are studying there." (Interview 49).

Portraits of Views of Success and Failure

Many children feed the migrant cycle for another generation, unable to break the pattern. For migrants, a successful person is "someone who has steady employment and does not have to rely on public assistance." These individuals are looked up to as role models for the younger children. They become community prototypes. An example of someone who was successful in breaking out of the migrant lifestyle, is this boy who "liked school", was "very smart", and finished high school when he was sixteen. He had gone to Saturday and evening classes, even though he didn't need them to graduate. When he finished early, he joined the Army for four years. Now that his first tour of duty is almost up, he is planning to re-enlist for 20 years. He has a wife and small

baby, is very happy, and is obviously a "success story".

> Another young man told the interviewer, "When I was a kid, I always wanted to be somebody. My first goal was to become a professional baseball player. That was my first goal". He was an excellent right fielder and, when he was 16 years old, he was offered a contract with the semi-professional league. However, when the manager discovered that he was only 16, he told the boy that he would have to bring his father to sign for him because he was underage:(Interview 93)

> "When I told my father, he got upset. He said that he didn't want me to play baseball. He told me to pursue a career." (Interview 93).

> "In my family, it was because I was dedicated. You know, when you are in college, this is a big problem, you get temptations from women, from liquor and everything. This is a big problem. That is the problem that I see in college right now. About 75% of the students just go there to have a good time". He had trouble with the other students. "You know, instead of helping each other, we were always trying to destroy each other. The only good friend I had was that guy that I graduated with. I wouldn't have made it through school without this Hispanic friend." (Interview 69).

The following interview can be considered typical for many families and their children. One of the things that is most common about it is the tremendous mixture of success and failure. Success comes against great odds and failure is measured against middle class ideals. Tito describes his sister:

> "My sister, she's 25. She has real serious health problems. She had heart fever when she was little [rheumatic] and lost most of her hearing. So she has a speech impediment, because she couldn't hear the words right to say them back. In school she started dropping from the 7th, all the way down to the 5th grade because of the teachers' attitudes. They even wanted to send her to a special

school for Mongoloids, for retarded people, even though she's not retarded. But my daddy took her out of there and saw she got back into regular school. She didn't graduate, but she's married now and has a family. Her little boy has a speech impediment, too, because he's learning how to talk from her, and when she says a word funny, that's how he learns to say it. But they are working on that at the school with therapy or something. He won't need to go to a special school for that either." (Interview 117).

Summary

This chapter discusses gender and age roles, norms for social behavior, and relationships with social institutions. In general, women perform the roles of wife, homemaker, child caregiver, and secondary wage earner. Men perform the roles of husband, father, and primary wage earner. These roles, however, are often distorted, due to the changing demands placed on recent arrivals. Children will, at times, assume adult roles in order to contribute to the family unit. Migrants experience ambivalence when dealing with social institutions. Although desiring to be independent of the "system," they find themselves dependent on institutions, or institutional personnel, to function within the "system." The institution with which migrants most often interact is the school. A number of factors (e.g. language, transportation, accessibility, interest, reception) influence migrants' involvement with the school. However, the lifestyle of migrants is the greatest impediment to their children's educational opportunities and triumphs. The lack of instructional continuity, and constant readjustment to new social and educational environments, are stressful to migrant children and their parents. Some parents have worked out ways to minimize the negative effects of their lifestyle on their children's education. Despite unfavorable odds, some migrants escape the cycle of migrancy. Those

who do, set a standard of achievement and become positive role models and motivator for other migrants. Those who do not escape, continue to persevere, working, and hoping that future generations will experience the success that eluded them.

CHAPTER 6

MIGRATION:

TRANSGENERATIONAL IMPACT

In the preceding chapters the stages of migration were discussed. This chapter goes beyond the adaptation phase. We will look at the effect of migration on subsequent non-migrant generations. Local ethnic enclaves, and even traditional religious groups, tend to slow down the process of adaptation to the new society.

The longer the delay in adaptation by the migrant, the greater effect it will produce in the second generation. A child tends to define his or her worldview based on the family's worldview. The following is an example:

> Angel, a 12 year old, was referred for evaluation because his mother perceived him as defiant and disrespectful. Upon further inquiry with his teachers, and through examination of school records, it was found that Angel had very good grades. His teachers described him as an independent young man who felt comfortable exploring difficult issues. He was praised for his enthusiasm and desire to participate in sports, choir, and the public speaking club. He was described as a potential candidate for the Honors program.

The disparity between the parents' worldview and the teachers' worldview created a psychological conflict for this child. On the one hand, the parents expected him to behave in traditional ways and obey the adults in the home. So they expressed concern about Angel's seemingly defiant behavior. On the other hand, the teachers perceived his transition and adaptation to school environment with enthusiasm. They empowered Angel to continue to become more independent and to express his ideas freely.

With Puerto Rican second and third generations, the delay of adaptation is more apparent. Comments such as, "I am Spanish, Hispanic or Latino" are indicative of the child's worldview and will determine how he or she sees himself or herself. Perception of self then affects how the child positions itself with regard to cultural background vis a vis that of parents. The wall between parents and children caused by adaptation problems brings about intergenerational conflicts that may go unresolved for a lifetime.

While it is valuable to retain the language of origin, it is also important to make a suitable transition from ethnic enclaves and begin to consider the new country and new cultures. Therefore it is essential for the Puerto Rican to learn English as soon as possible. When this is accomplished the second generation is not taxed with the responsibility of serving in the role of translator, or surrogate adult, while the parents are going through the process of adaptation.

In emotional terms, a neighborhood which imitates the country of origin constitutes an environment that buffers the cross cultural exposure of the recent arrival. It slows any adaptive process. In many cases, therapy has to focus on

the second generation and its role in the adaptation of the extended family (first and second generation). Children need to achieve an identity and autonomy in the receiving country.

The linguistic, environmental, and cultural factors have delayed the adaptation of the first generation. These factors will take the form of intergenerational/intercultural conflicts. These conflicts are frequently expressed in cultural expectation of behavior. This behavior includes passivity, dependence, the acquisition of language, motor skills, and communication talents skills. Group communication skills amongst Puerto Ricans include physical and emotional expression. Puerto Ricans are taught the importance of close proximity. Such behavioral expressions are different and, many times, not welcomed or accepted in the United States.

Children's decision-making power

Even though parents and others influence the children to stay in school, one of the most interesting findings of this study was that the ultimate decision to stay in school or drop out is made by the children themselves. The parents, have influence, but when the children start being viewed as adults, or become increasingly independent workers, the decision-making power shifts. Parent, are put in an ambivalent position about their authority (both hypothetical and practical authority) over their children's educational decisions. By age 15, many migrant children have total control over the decision as to whether or not they stay in school. Following is a typical example:

> "Here in my house the decision is made by my children, to leave and not to return (to school). He doesn't want to go. Their father and I send them so that

> they would know how to defend themselves to take advantage (of the schools). But I don't know if they told the truth, or they were deceiving us, but they said they were always fighting with others. Or an American would put out their foot and trip them and make them fall, or say 'Pororican greaser', or hit them. There were always fights between the Americans and the Hispanics. I don't know if it is the truth or it is lies of theirs, but we never wanted them to quit school. They made the decision and didn't want to go. Rogelio quit because there were boys of the same age, but taller, larger, who grabbed him in the bathroom and told him that he had to smoke a cigarette. He said in English, 'Que nó, que nó'. because he didn't want any mariJuana. And they said, 'yes, Rogelio, you have to smoke mariJuana'. He replied 'No, I don't want to', I don't want to. He refused to go to school. 'It is hard'. (Interview 83).

If children are the ones who make this major decision, schools can have a significant impact on drop-out rates by modifying the beliefs and behaviors of the children themselves, and by getting the parents to help.

I asked Perfecto what he would do, if his daughter changed her mind and decided to drop out of school. Perfecto said he would try to advise her not to make that mistake, but ultimately he could not force her to go.

> He said that, after they turn 16, children can get out of school. If the child did not want to go to school, it would be useless to force her, he thought. He said he could make her go, but she would find a way to get out or leave the school. (Interview 61).

Sluski (1979) suggests that in many cases the clash between the first and second generation is intercultural rather than intergenerational. The conflict, between the child's dominant style of coping (usually in the family's culture) and the differently defined rules and boundaries within the cultural and linguistic

groups encountered in the United States, results in a label of delinquency for the child's behavior. The consequences are dire for the child and for the family.

There are several factors to consider in discussing intergenerational relations of Puerto Ricans. These factors include: age at which migration took place, language fluency in English and Spanish, religion and belief systems, school history of the migrant family, as well as previous and current work history of the family. The second generation person will adjust best if he or she learns the language, has friends outside the ethnic enclaves, and becomes engaged in formal religious and educational activities.

Transgenerational impact as presented in popular literature

The reality of the evolving history of our country incorporates new themes in national literature. The theme of migration to the United States arouses major interest, showing the movement from the countryside and small Island towns to the capital, San Juan. And then from San Juan to the United States.

Paisa

With the appearance of the short novel , " *Paisa*" (1950), written by José Luis González, Puerto Rican literature began to develop, with realism, the theme of the Puerto Rican migration to the United States. José Luis González presents the image (indirectly reported by the characters) of a Puerto Rico in crisis, abounding with social and economic problems.

The novel, by Gónzalez, mirrored a great preoccupation with national problems. Puerto Rico appears as a people plagued by a daily fight for survival. The search for most elementary needs (food, clothing, and shelter), comes in conflict with the economic deterioration in the country. As a final solution to the economic dilemma, the Puerto Rican native migrates to the United States.

The family of *Andrés*, the hero of "*Paisa*", had abandoned the countryside, because of hunger and poverty, to establish themselves in the slum area of San Juan which was known by the poetic name of "*La Perla*". The environment of the slum affects the character of the family in diverse ways.

Work on the docks exhausted the physical endurance of the father. One day, while an enormous load was being lifted into a boat, it fell on the father, killing him instantaneously.

For several days, this family had remained united, in spite of the misery and the sorrow. Then, slowly, the family begins to disintegrate. The mother gets work as a maid in San Juan. The grandfather returns to the rural area in the interior of the Island with the four youngest children. Upon arrival, he proceeds to distribute them among relatives that still remained.

Andrés, the oldest of the five brothers, was in second grade when his father died. The godfather, who had migrated to the United States a year earlier, upon learning of the death of *Andres's* father, sends *Andres* a letter saying the following:

> "This is truth, we do not live in affluence, but there is always room for one more. As you know, when the father is not present, the godfather is called upon to take care of the child in his place. I am sending a ticket by certified mail so that you can come to live with us next week".

We find in this letter two things that can not be ignored. Firstly, the sense of responsibility felt by the godfather. He knows that it is his most Christian duty to take the place of the father in the upbringing and education of the boy. This is a responsibility of religious imposition that is slowly disappearing amongst Puerto Ricans in the mainland. Secondly, we are reminded of the humanitarian sensibility of the Puerto Rican in the United States. In spite of living in very cramped apartments which hardly accommodate a small family, there is always room for the caring Puerto Rican to accommodate somebody else in need.

Andrés could not sleep thinking about the trip. He feared that, if he went to sleep, he would miss the plane which would carry him to the city of hope.

Andres' dream was the consuming desire of many Puerto Ricans during one of the most depressing times in the modern history of the Island. Analyzing *Paisa*, we find that the problem of migration was accentuated from the late 1940's, on. During this period, the Puerto Rican economic base went from an agricultural rural transition to one which was rapid, industrial, and urban in all aspects. The movement of people from fields located in the interior to the city, in search of better living conditions, created a situation that began to turn critical. The rural population which moved from the farmlands in the interior of the Island, was displaced to the outskirts of San Juan, and subsequently to the

United States.

Thus *Andrés* migrates, dreaming about the good conditions of life that awaited him in New York. We find Andrés in a very different environment than that of Puerto Rico. Andrés is now approximately ten years old. The godfather had enrolled him in public school. A new world opens a new pathway prepared for a serious appointment with destiny.

Since *Andrés* didn't speak English, he was lowered one grade. The school principal promised that, once Andrés learned, he would be placed in third grade. While on the playground one day, some boys attacked *Andres*. He was on his way to tell his teacher about what had just happened. A classmate warns *Andres* not to say anything because he would be blamed for the assault. This assertion is indicative that where a Puerto Rican is concerned, even where he is right, very few people would believe him.

Despite their conditions, Puerto Ricans accept, up to a certain point, the social rejection that they are subjected to by the majority society. The poor economic, social, and psychological conditions of the Island motivates Puerto Ricans to formulate an idealized conception of the mainland United States. They perceive themselves as backward and visualize life in the States as more advanced. However, the anticipated "advancement" does not seem to be a goal for those who differentiate services, products, machines, and buildings which they will make available to migrants. The newcomers' task is limited to fighting to stay alive. Frustrations become incidental in comparison with the hopelessness felt by the Puerto Rican.

José Luis González relates that Andrés' godfather had been one of the first Puerto Ricans to move into Harlem. He was not fleeing from his countrymen, but went because there was better housing available there.

Andrés' godfather tells us about a co-worker who found a note in his mailbox which warned him that Puerto Ricans had nothing to look for in New York. Furthermore, he was threatened that, if he didn't move, something terrible would happen. Once again the troubles of adjustment to a hostile environment is presented by the author. José Luis González depicts this problem with a frightening realism in the following narration:

> "One afternoon, a Puerto Rican who was returning home from work was stopped in his tracks, paralyzed with horror, in the areaway entrance to the building where he lived. Beside a trash can knocked over on the sidewalk, was the small arm of a motionless boy. The man took three steps, all the muscles of his body were tense, he held his breath. And then he clearly saw the child, dead inside the trash can. The horrible identification was not necessary. From the first terrible, shocking moment, he had recognized the little arm of his six year old son, who was accustomed to play alone on the sidewalk. He was dead. His little head was brutally pounded, half sunken in the garbage can."

Another episode that González shares with us to demonstrate bias against Puerto Ricans concerns the owner of a business. He employed Andrés, believing that he was Italian. Andrés' last name, Morales, was taken by the store owner to be Morelli. One day the man asked Andrés what part of Italy he was from. Andrés informed him that he was Puerto Rican and he was fired on the spot.

Andrés had performed various humble jobs. But, because he was Puerto Rican, he was fired from all of them. José Luis González shows us, once more, that the possibilities of existence in a metropolis are conditional. The situation was polarized in terms of the "haves" and the "have not". This concept explains the economic and social conditions to which the Puerto Rican is subjected in the United States. Human life remains reduced to simply competition for survival.

The social rejection which Andrés experienced made him suffer terrible frustrations. He lived disillusioned and disappointed. He had now assimilated a new culture and had forgotten the folkways of the Puerto Rican from the Island.

Finally, *Perico,* an acquaintance of Andrés, pressures him to become involved in street crime. Perico and Andrés hold up a "*bodega*". Their luck runs out when the owner produces a gun and shoots both of them. Thus ends Andrés fight for survival.

Summary

This chapter has briefly described the issue of intergenerational impact on migration. Irrespective of the process, most families emerge with new individual and collective strengths.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

This chapter summarizes the contents of the book and proposes in a concluding statement some specific needs that Puerto Ricans have in receiving mental health services. The book proposes a psychology for Puerto Rican migration. The psychology of Puerto Rican migrants is composed of five stages of migration: the anticipation before migration, the act of migration, over-compensation, decompensation, and adaptation.

A person seldom migrates alone. Even the initial migrants who came to do agrarian work in New Jersey and Pennsylvania were not alone. They carried with them a culture, ideas, and visions of a better, kindly world. This book has attempted to present characteristics of that culture and, through interviews, the values and dreams of the Puerto Rican migrant.

Very few people go anywhere alone, much less a person who has chosen to migrate. Not even those totally migrated by themselves to establish a beachhead for followers. No one leaves the homeland without having been touched by his/hers cultural roots. Migrants do not move in a vacuum. Migrants have physical, psychological, cultural, and spiritual imprints which one forever carries.

Human beings are essentially the products of their circumstance. No matter how many times the act of migration takes place, migrants carry the memory of what was, what they were, what they could have been. It is as though they were mired in their history. They are themselves, living history which is colored by the memory of their culture.

This memory persists, sometimes vague, sometimes sharp and clear. It reminds them of the "barrio", of their childhood, of their adolescence, of the first love, and the first time that the migrant was physically or emotionally "booted on the behind".

The imprint presents itself in the memory of a distant event that suddenly comes into our awareness, or an event that we recall as we drive to work in the morning. It can be triggered by a gesture, an-open hand, a smile lost in a time of misunderstanding, or a song from our very rich folklore.

We are, now, what our parents, our barrio, and our town wanted us to be yesterday, "What we are today" is the long-elusive goal that for so long a time we attempted that is why we never spoken, always stifled by inhibition, in the fear of being rejected. We lacked confidence in ourselves, we are fearful of risks taking.

We experience a tumult in our heart and souls-- contrasting feelings-- the hope of immediately resolving the problems that bear upon us and, a relief that we will not be questioned further about our inability to make it, on the one hand. On the other hand the Puerto Rican migrant is tortured by the guilty feeling of

leaving our nativeland, our barrio, our family, our soil, and our world. The turmoil brings with it the pain of the broken dream. The danger of losing hope.

Intergenerational perceptions of migration and their effect on the psychology of Puerto Rican migration

In order that the reader may understand the reality of the Puerto Rican, it is important to note that there are at least three generations of Puerto Ricans that we can distinctly identify today.

The first generation embrace the culture and tradition of the Island. They bring values that are found today in the central mountain regions. These values include: (1) belief in the traditional bonds among family members; (2) belief in the extended family; (3) belief that the nuclear family is patriarchal; (4) belief that the role of the father is to protect and provide. Machismo is a virtue that encompasses courage, romanticism, and a belief in the Virgin; (5) belief that the role of women is to hold the family together. Marianismo is a virtue that encompasses understanding and love; (6) that respect and personalism are the fabric that uphold individual dignity.

The first generation Puerto Rican migrant relies on traditional values to begin to deal with the culture shock felt by the family upon arrival at a new destination. The family attempts to overcompensate (exagerar la nota). The role of the family as defined traditionally is relied on strongly. In order to survive the culture clash, the family immediately identifies others from the same town

and organizes the "barrio". It is in the "barrios" that the native culture is re-created and preserved. Hispanic churches, both Catholic and Protestant, emerge and many of the new inhabitants begin to look at spiritism as a way to deal with the new country, weather, society, and environment.

The second generation is composed by children and adolescents who are the first in their families to become exposed to: English language, schools, environment outside of the "barrio", and to other people their own age but with a different world view. The interaction between these children and adolescents with their peers, the interaction with their teachers and other significant adults in school, and the interaction with their parents, creates a new experience stress, failure, and defeat. From a clinical perspective this generation is suffering from Acculturation stress.

The basic problem is: To whom can these children and adolescents run for help? They don't want to offend their parents. Yet they know that, if they are going to succeed, they must adjust. Children and adolescents, part of the second generation, must develop new values, new orientations, new worldview. The worldview often times becomes an accommodation of the traditional culture and the new culture (*fulinga*).

The second generation finds itself in an awkward situation. In order to receive help from the system, they must distance themselves from the language and the values taught to them by their parents. They must forego the "familia" (family) to be a part of the "sociedad" (mainstream).

"This is a picture of my daughter Luisa; she went to Penn state and graduated with honors. She is now an elementary school teacher. My husband and I sacrificed a lot to help her achieve her goal. She hasn't been all that grateful. I don't think she likes us anymore. After she came back from the University, she got her own apartment, leaving a fine room here in the house, and only visits on the weekends. She doesn't call her grandmother in Puerto Rico as often either. Just last week she was telling me that she didn't like to call because she did not understand them. Can you imagine, forgetting her own language? (Interview 284)

While parents feel happy and proud for the achievement of their children, they feel that children have less care for them, are more selfish, and enjoy more the American way than being in the neighborhood.

First generation Puerto Ricans tend to be more compliant with their bosses. They do not show a sense of permanence. They are always talking of going back to Puerto Rico, especially around holidays or when something is sour at work. Children compare the parents of their peers, and begin to introject an image of themselves as lazy, detached, and non-involved. They translate their parents' belief in the will of God (*que sea lo que Dios quiera, Dios nos proveerá)* , into a pattern of learned helplessness. Children and adolescents then postpone the process of acculturation, so that they can help their parents out. As a result, children and adolescents become isolated from their peers. They often discontinue school and stay home without doing for themselves.

When adolescents begin to feel the pressures of the outside community to perform, (the process of value transformation from the old culture to the new culture), that is when the Puerto Rican psychology is most in evidence. For many a way to integrate the inability to pay attention to the parents and to

continue to forge ahead, is to develop somatic symptoms, hallucinations, drug and alcohol abuse, and other symptoms. It is at this time that the use of mental health facilities is increased.

Many Puerto Ricans realize that they need and want help. In seeking help they will attempt to use the traditional agencies. They find that these agencies are not culturally or linguistically sensitive to their needs. The next step then, is to find providers in their natural support system. The natural support system begins with a minister or an elder in the family system, to a spiritist, and the use of herbs from the local "Botánica", to counseling services, to mental health facilities.

Psychological Assessment and the Puerto Rican Child

In order to provide a valid and reliable assessment of the Puerto Rican child, the professional must understand the political, cultural, and socioeconomic realities affecting the child. The examiner must realize the existence and interaction of cultural, generational and developmental factors as they interact between the parents and the child. The cultural factors include: language, different culture, different values, and the constant barrage of racial and political discrimination. For children, it is extremely difficult to develop self-definition in any arena, when they, in their families are always receiving the message that they someday will go back. There is no sense of permanence in the United States.

Generation differences are found in the changing moral and cultural

factors that deal with sex-role differences, attitude toward sexuality, a standard for use of drug and alcohol. The reference point for many Puerto Rican adolescents is the MTV. Peer pressure and the culture of the streets are at the root of the disagreement between what parents believe to be morally correct and what their children believe to be correct for them.

The children of the second generation are present-time oriented. They are the "here and now" society. Therefore, they perceive failure in delayed gratification. Resentment towards their first generation parents creates in the children a sense of londiness, a sense of being blamed, a sense of resentment for all authority, and an inability to trust others, especially if they are older. Following is one example:

> "Why should I go to school? I will probably be shot at 15 anyway. And, if I am not shot then I will probably make a girl pregnant and have to drop out anyway.... I know I will never graduate from High School if I stay here". (Interview 257)

When working with Puerto Rican children, it is necessary to first spend time understanding their worldview and then provide challenges that provide immediate gratification. The therapist must always keep in mind the Puerto Rican culture and the religious background of the child when attempting to address issues of individuality and dependence.

The process of development is very important in addressing the mental health needs of Puerto Rican children and adolescents. Puerto Ricans encourage and nurture family cohesion and dependence on the elderly. Many Puerto Ricans belong to Protestant sect and are dependent on the advice of the

minister of the Church leadership. Schools tend to foster individuality and encourage the child to achieve individually, as much as possible. Puerto Ricans perceive their offspring as children, irrespective of their age. Therefore in helping pre-adolescents and adolescents to grow up in American society, the helping professional must consider the cultural background of the child and suggest ways that do not threaten the family structure. Parents should never "be blamed" for cultural behaviors.

Children and adolescents are often brought to mental health facilities because they are oppositional, irresponsible, or disrespectful. What is probably occurring is a struggle between parents who demand respect and, repress the child if they don't follow the rules, and children who are acting out to assert their individuality.

Treatment Modalities with Puerto Rican Children and Adolescents

In the last five years, several facilities have opened their door to serve the mental health needs of Puerto Ricans in a culturally and linguistically appropriate fashion. These facilities outside of Philadelphia include: Senderos in York, PA., a partial hospitalization program; Nuestra Clinica in Lancaster, the only triple diagnosis (Drug and Alcohol, Mental Health and HIV/AIDS) clinic in Pennsylvania; CCAM in the Spanish Speaking Council in Reading, which offers counseling to children and adolescents; and CSM (Centro de Servicios Múltiples) in Reading, which offers Christian counseling to children and their parents.

Most of these programs are characterized for providing a culturally sensitive care using an ecological-system model with a focus on the family, a community orientation, and individual and group treatment in the clients', native language.

Therapists work as active partners of their clients in bridging the client's needs and the expectations of the new society. This becomes the foundation for a therapeutic relationship which will eventually permit the introduction of new ideas and more constructive coping strategies to assist the client in the adaptation process.

In the case of CSM (Centro de Servicios Multiples) in Reading, there has been an attempt to include religion as a part of the healing process. The role of the therapist is to bridge the old with the new and also, to bring the perspective that God will help those that help themselves.

When dealing with Puerto Rican clientele, the therapist must be aware of the real-life situation of their clients. The client's emotional problems are made worsened by the real-life experience of the client. The multi-fadimensional perspectives proposed herein, require that the therapist assume an active and directive stance in the treatment of their clientele (Inclan and Herron, 1989).

This chapter has presented some suggestions as to how to address the mental health needs of Puerto Ricans. It described the existence of inter-generational differences and how they strain the relationship between parents and children.

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